

NARROW IS THE WAY



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# NARROW IS THE WAY

by

WILLIAM E. PARK, D.D.

*President of The Northfield Schools*

1945

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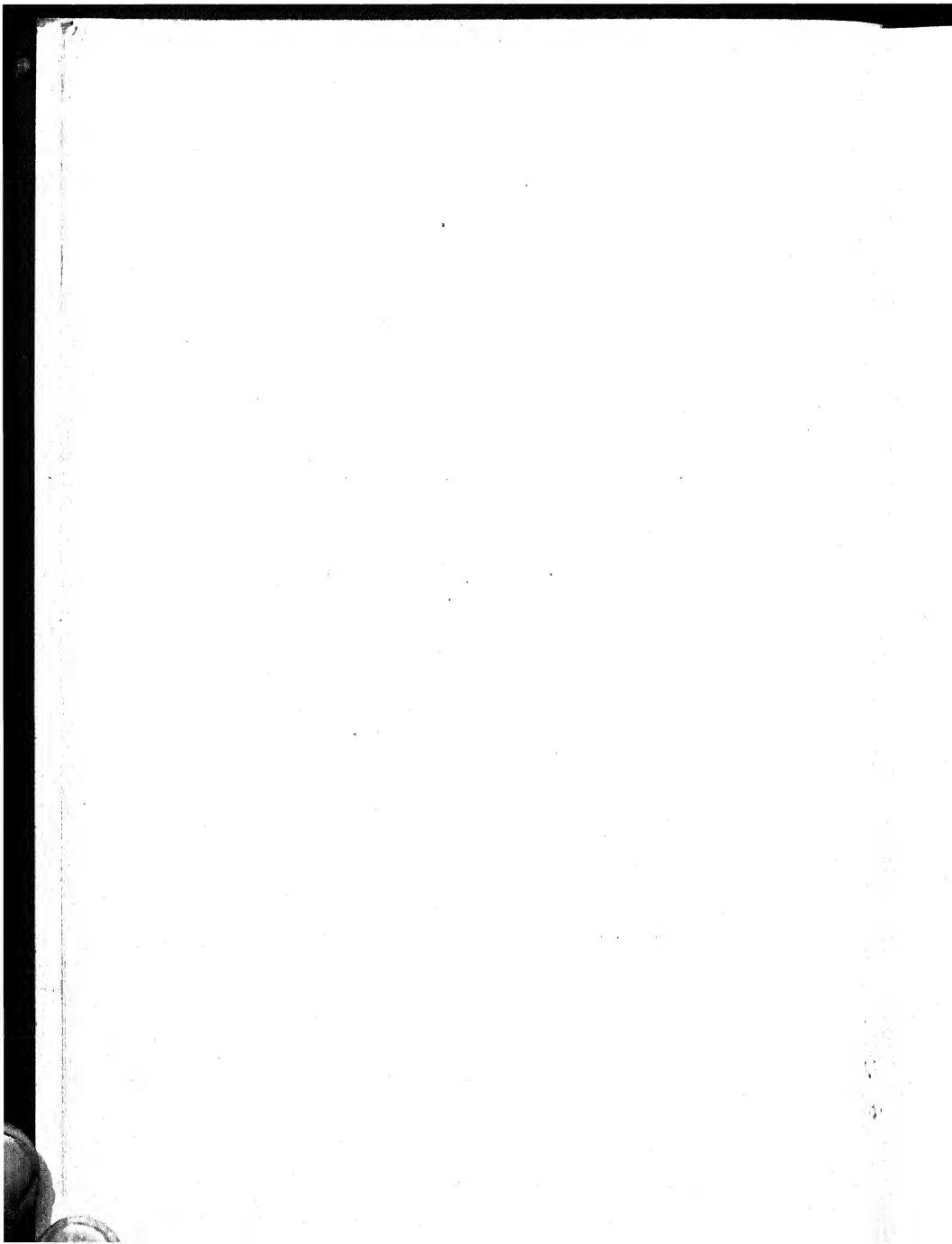
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*DEDICATION*

*To*

*J. E. P.*

*"Liked and respected for his own sake as a human being,  
and at the same time trusted and depended  
upon for his expert professional  
knowledge and skill."*



## FOREWORD

DURING the last four years it has been my privilege to preach almost entirely in school and college chapels. After a number of years of preaching in my own churches, it has been a tremendous change. I have missed those kindly parishioners who used to come up each Sunday and tell me it was the best sermon I had ever preached, even though I knew their comments were based on friendliness to me and not critical appraisal. I have missed writing sermons for people whose daily ways of living and problems I was acquainted with. I have found it hard to stand each Sunday in a pulpit and look out on faces I have never seen before. Many times I have had the feeling that my student congregations were daring me to make them listen. I have missed the well-planned worship service leading to the sermon which one finds in a church, for many schools and colleges pay little attention to the art of worship.

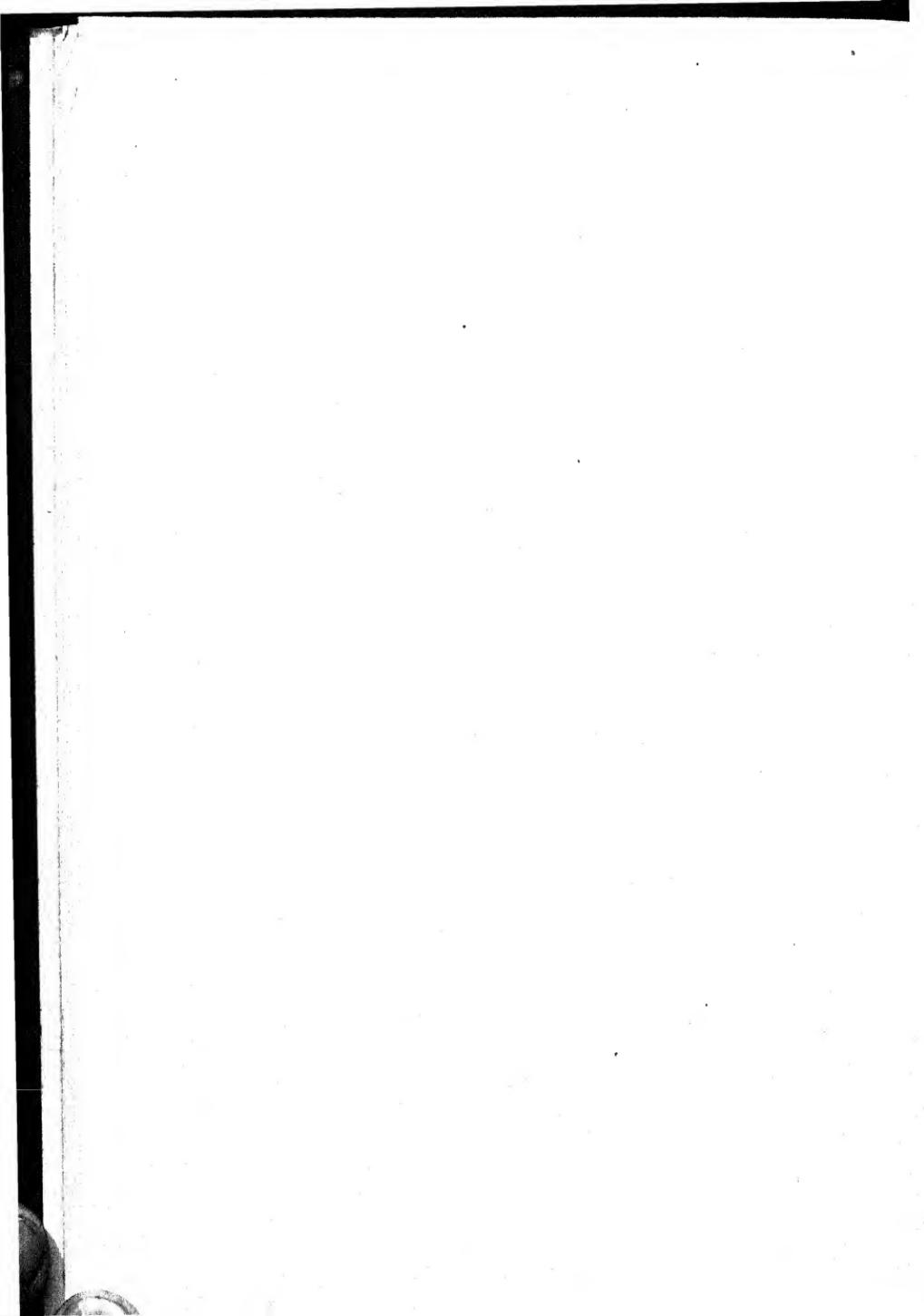
However, there is a great thrill in preaching to student congregations. One never gets the feeling of the foolishness of preaching that sometimes comes to the preacher on a Sunday when his congregation is made up for the most part of elderly men and women who have listened to hundreds and hundreds of sermons in their lives, and are at an age where one more sermon seems to have the same result as one more drop of water on a duck's back. The student congregation is made up of young men and women

who have not heard too many sermons, whose minds are not closed, and who are still thinking through their own philosophy of life. It is exciting to preach to them and know that perhaps something a minister says may penetrate their minds and really affect their way of living. Many ministers in pastorates have often felt that they could preach their best sermons on Sunday afternoon, for often the best thoughts on the subject of the morning sermon come to a man after he has preached it. The preacher in the school and college chapel has the opportunity of rewriting his sermons, so that sometimes after he has rewritten his sermon once or twice, it really begins to express the idea he had in mind the first time he preached it, but which failed to get across.

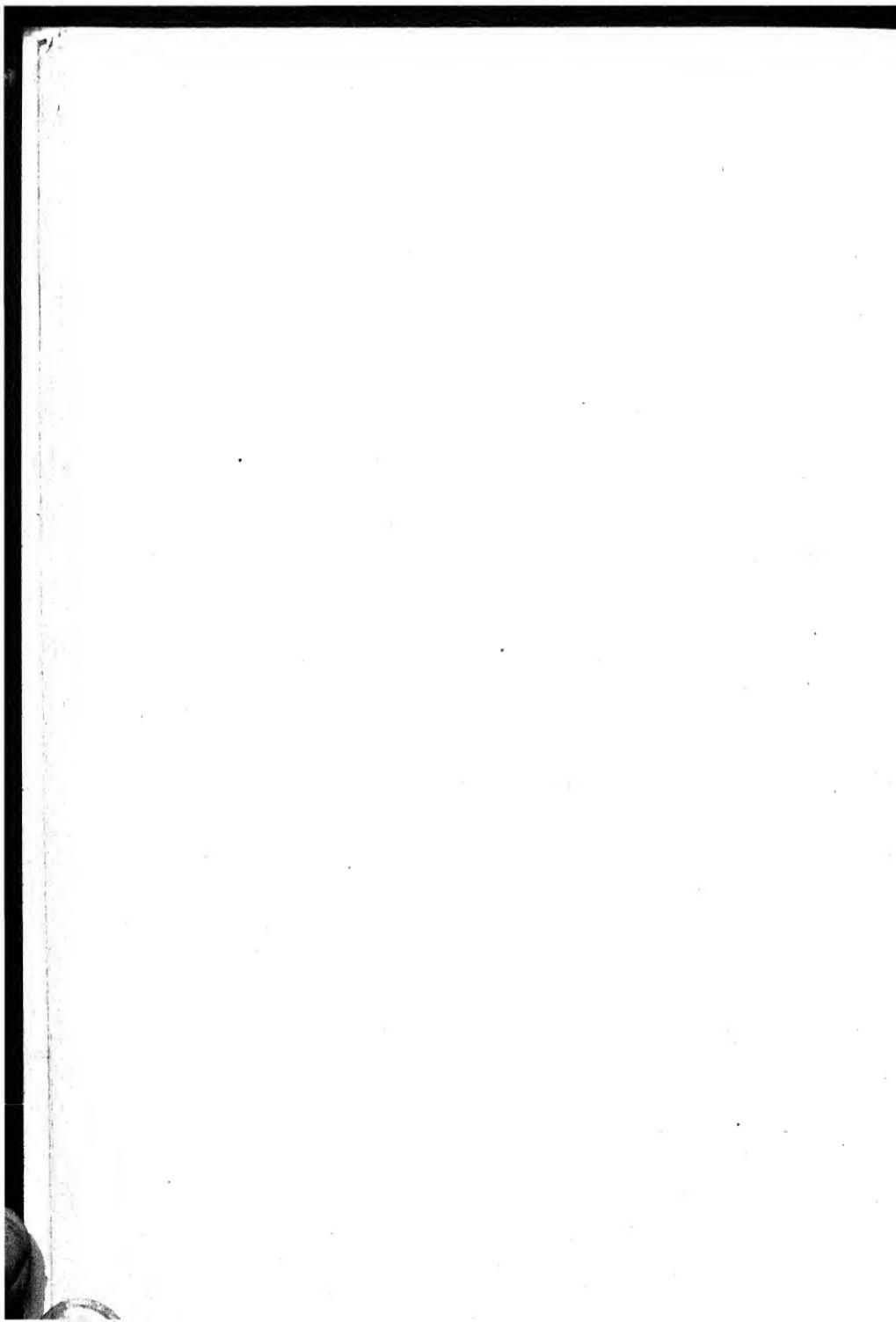
Many of the sermons in this book were first preached to the students of The Northfield Schools and then rewritten and preached in other schools and colleges. I am deeply grateful to the boys of Mount Hermon School and to the girls of The Northfield School for Girls who listened so patiently and made so many helpful suggestions. I also want to express my thanks to those in charge of the religious services in the other schools and colleges where these sermons were preached, for all they did to make my visits so happy. Everywhere I have gone I have been impressed with the strong religious leadership given to students, with the whole-hearted cooperation of the administration with religious work, and with the sincere interest manifest in the students themselves. No one can overestimate the important place of the interdenominational school and college chapel in the religious life of America. It is perhaps here that the cause of Christian unity and ecumenicity is making its greatest advances.

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NARROW IS THE WAY



## NARROW IS THE WAY

Is it not true that the great criticism which every new generation always makes of every old generation is that the old generation is narrow-minded? Many young people are sure that they could love their parents a great deal more if only they weren't so confoundedly narrow-minded. There are few young people who, at one time or another, have not brought such a charge against a mother or a father. If a parent has courage enough to suggest to a child that three o'clock in the morning is not exactly a suitable time to come home from a party, that parent is immediately labeled as being narrow-minded. The parent who forbids Sunday movies or Sunday card-playing or other like entertainments is narrow-minded. If any mother or father is so foolish as to mention the fact that they didn't do such things when they were young, their ears will ring for many an hour with the sound of the voices of their offspring, as they describe in righteous indignation the sins of narrow-minded parents. It does little good to point out to young people that every generation has felt somewhat the same about the previous one, for every young person knows that nobody is quite as narrow-minded as mother and father.

Parents, however, are not the only ones who face this problem. Anyone who is interested in religion, or educa-

tion, or life, sooner or later runs up against some form of this accusation. There is no field of human endeavor where there is not a question of being narrow or being broad. The more complex life becomes, the more difficult is this issue. When life was relatively simple it was easy to believe certain things and not be labeled narrow-minded, but in a complicated civilization to believe in anything at all becomes a sign of narrow-mindedness. For example, our forefathers, particularly in regard to their religion, moved within definitely drawn boundary lines. They knew what was right and what was wrong; they knew what to accept as true, what to discard as false; they had a formula for every circumstance, and a text for each contingency; and though they may have been very narrow-minded, at least it was considered by most to be a great virtue. But today everything is different. If anyone pretends to be able to make such clear-cut distinctions between right and wrong, between the sacred and the profane, between Godliness and secularity, such a person is narrow-minded, and it is not a virtue. Most of the members of my generation have been brought up to regard narrow-mindedness as one of the cardinal sins. And yet it is plain to see the person who is too broad-minded would find it hard to believe in anything. I wonder if that isn't just the distinction between the older and the younger generation. The older generation is narrow-minded because it does have a few certain beliefs; the younger generation is broad-minded simply because it has reached no certainty on any subject.

Frankly, I am worried by this problem. I pride myself on being broad-minded. Yet I foresee the day not far off when one of my sons will call me narrow-minded. Prob-

ably when I suggest to him that it would be better if he didn't land his airplane on the roof of our home after midnight, I shall be charged with narrow-mindedness and told that everybody is doing it. At least sooner or later such an accusation will be made against me; for the older I become the more chance there will be that I shall have even more definite beliefs about conduct, and life, and religion, than I hold now. Well, is narrowness in this sense a sin? Is the younger generation right in condemning the older generation for being narrow-minded?

At the outset, I think most of us would agree that narrowness is not, in itself, a sin. We are living in an age of specialization, where a person's work and interest must necessarily be confined within very narrow limits. Success in this world is more and more determined by the ability to know thoroughly one line of endeavor and only one. Just as the general store of our forefathers' day is almost a dead institution, except insofar as the modern drugstore has resurrected it, and we have a store to supply each of our needs, so everywhere the same process has gone on. We have specialists in every field. The more specialists there are the more narrow-minded people become. It is true that the whole trend of our civilization is toward narrowness, which is deeply wrought into the inmost processes of living. The old country doctor, who used to know something about every side of medicine and could do almost anything, is rapidly becoming a man of the past. Today we have an eye, ear, nose, and throat specialist. In fact, there is a specialist for almost any ailment we may have. And the same is true in every profession. Such specialization makes for narrow-mindedness. The more perfectly a person understands and does his special work

the more narrow-minded he is apt to become. His life and his interests become centered in such a small area that it becomes almost impossible to be broad-minded.

When we consider the problem of narrowness in this light, we begin to see that narrow-mindedness is not always a sin. It is rather the reason for the great advances of our civilization. All the wonderful inventions of the last hundred years have been brought about by men and women who confined their work and interests to very narrow limits. For example, think of the narrow lives Madame Curie and her husband led. They shut themselves up for almost four years within the narrow walls of a small, dilapidated shed, and the result of that confinement was the discovery of radium. The most pitiful note in Madame Curie's career is to see how, after fame had broken down the barriers of her life, she still longed and hoped that some day she might return to her old way of living. Most great discoveries have been the result of the fact that men and women have led narrow lives. The same thing is true in other fields of human endeavor. Sir Walter Raleigh wrote his famous history of the world during the time he was a prisoner in the Tower of London. Would Bunyan ever have written "Pilgrim's Progress" if it were not for the fact that he suddenly found himself facing twelve years of life within the narrow walls of a cell? Did not St. Paul write his best letters when he was confined in prison? How often it has been true that the greatest works and productions of the race have been the direct result of very narrow lives. Now the same thing is true of religion. Christianity would not have won its victory and gained its position in the world if it had not employed this method of narrowness. The early Christians concentrated on one

side of life. They lost sight of other sides of life, but what they gained for themselves and for the future was worth the sacrifice. What is true of Christianity is true of any great movement, it must be confined within narrow limits, just as any great and successful leader must be narrow-minded.

Have you ever stopped to consider that Jesus was very narrow-minded? He set up definite boundaries for Himself; He shut Himself up within contracted limits. Think, for example, how narrow was the area inside of which He did all His work. He lived His entire life in Palestine, a little country not much larger than the state of Massachusetts. For thirty years He lived and worked in that small area, and never set foot on any other soil. But if the field of His work was narrow, consider how much more limited was the character of the work. Jesus was a specialist, if ever there was one. There were many good things that a man might have done living in Palestine, but Jesus came to do only one thing, which He believed His Heavenly Father had sent Him to do. Few there were who understood His narrowness, and many tempted Him and tried to influence Him into doing things outside His own field, but He always overcame such temptations. He told them that He had come to do the will of God, and that was all. If they would follow Him they had better understand that the way was narrow. "Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life," He said. Certainly it is true that Jesus followed the narrow way. In the realm of the mind He also chose the way that was narrow. To Him certain ideas of God were true and others were false, and no one could change those facts. God was a loving Father, and no Scribe or Pharisee could ever alter that belief. Certain concep-

tions of man were correct and others erroneous. Jesus believed that man was the child of God, and He never wavered from that belief. Certain standards of duty were to Jesus right and others wrong, and He confined His belief within narrow limits. With all the strength of His mind and heart and soul He clung to what He knew was true, and fought vigorously against the false. Yes, He was narrow-minded. Nothing changed His beliefs, not even death. He never shrank even at the end from holding clear-cut opinions and expressing them with all the strength He possessed. "Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life."

If this is true, perhaps narrow-mindedness is not such a sin as we have been led to believe. Perhaps this charge which is levelled at the older generation by the younger is not a condemnation at all, but rather a compliment. If Jesus was narrow-minded, surely it cannot be a sin. What do you think about this problem? Is narrow-mindedness, after all, a virtue?

Do you understand that in talking of this idea of narrowness we have been discussing the underlying principle of all the fine arts? Great art is produced by the very narrowness of the limitations which it imposes on itself. When the famous painter, Sir Joshua Reynolds, was asked how long it had taken him to paint a certain picture, he replied, "All my life." That is a good example of this doctrine of narrowness. Any great and successful artist in any field, whether it is painting or music or writing, must confine his activity in narrow limits, must discipline himself, and must sacrifice whole areas of life enjoyed by others. Jesus believed that life itself was a fine art. To live successfully and happily one must necessarily walk the

narrow path. One cannot think as he pleases, feel as he wants to, act as the whim may lead him. He cannot be broad-minded. He must accept certain truths and believe in them and only them. That was what faith was to Jesus; and anyone who has a strong faith is narrow-minded.

Nevertheless, I am sure that some of you are thinking that there is something wrong with this doctrine of narrowness. You will agree that this is an age of specialization which makes us confine our work and interests in narrow limits; you will also agree that the most successful people have been narrow-minded, and that Jesus Himself was; but somehow or other it is hard to agree that narrow-mindedness is always a virtue. Perhaps you have a friend who is so narrow-minded that he is a bigot, and the most unpleasant person you know. Perhaps you do have parents who are so narrow in their views that they do not understand your problems at all, and are most unpleasant parents. Surely we can all think of cases where it would be folly to call narrow-mindedness a virtue. For example, a writer in England tells this story of her youth. Her family went for the holidays into a remote part of the Lake district. There they came to know an old man who had never seen a railroad train, and more than that, did not believe there was such a thing. Whereupon the lady's father took him for a long drive to a place where a railroad viaduct stretched before them, and there they waited until a train came puffing along. They waited in silence to hear what the old man would say. Finally, he looked at her father and said: "I still don't believe it." Now if you know people as narrow as that old man, you must find it hard to believe that narrow-mindedness is a virtue. We all know people who remark in the face of truth, "I still don't

believe it," which is not only the sign of a narrow mind but of a closed mind. Well, what is the answer to this problem? Narrow-mindedness cannot be both a sin and a virtue!

Can we not find the best answer to this question in the life of Jesus? Jesus, as we have seen, was narrow-minded; He walked the narrow path. But His narrowness was not a sin, because it was the product of the breadth of His heart; in other words His narrowness was caused by the very magnitude of His love. He was narrow because He carried in His heart the ideal of a kingdom which had no boundaries. His narrowness was not a sin because His affections and sympathies and love knew no bounds. That was why He warned His followers against setting up barriers to their forgiveness and sympathy. When Peter asked Jesus how often a man ought to forgive another who had trespassed against him, and suggested seven as a number grotesquely large, Jesus replied in words meaning: "You cannot make accurate calculations in the realm of love. Where the heart is concerned there are no boundaries. Mathematics has nothing to do with the affections."

This is the answer to our problem. We can be as narrow-minded as we want and it will not be a sin and nobody will dislike us if we have big hearts. If we have as broad a love for mankind as Jesus had, and if that love motivates our narrow-mindedness, we can be sure our narrowness is a virtue. An excellent example of what I mean is found in these words of a well-known scientist. He writes: "The greatest problems that confront the human race are how to promote social cooperation; how to increase loyalty to truth; how to promote justice and brotherhood; how to

expand ethics, until it shall embrace all mankind." And then he adds significantly: "These problems are problems for science as well as for government, education, and religion." Do you catch the underlying meaning of those words? Science has confined itself necessarily within narrow limits, but its narrowness has been based too much on a love of itself. Science has produced knowledge to a great extent for its own sake, and much of the chaos of the present world has been brought about by that fact. But here is a recognition that unless science for science's sake is changed to science for humanity's sake, there can be little hope for our civilization. The hope of world recovery lies in the application of this very conception to every field of human endeavor. When scientists, businessmen, doctors, lawyers, teachers, statesmen, in fact all men and women in every walk of life, work within the narrow limits of their special fields, not simply for their own interests but for human betterment, then and then only will the future of our land and our world be secure. The same is true in our own lives. Success and happiness in this life depend upon narrowness, upon having a few certain beliefs which we would be willing to die for; but at the same time we must be sure that our affections and sympathies are as broad as those beliefs are narrow. The older generation is accused of being narrow-minded. But that narrowness, if it is brought about by a broad love for the best interests of the younger generation, is a praiseworthy characteristic.

"Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life." To become true Christians we must follow a very narrow path. But if the love in our hearts is as broad as Christ's was our journey will not be difficult. Jesus was narrow-minded;

He walked on a road which led from a carpenter's shop to Golgotha. He chose this narrow way because of His great love for us. He calls us each one to follow Him on that narrow way, which leads to life. But whether we can answer that call depends upon the condition of our hearts, on whether we have a broad love and affection for our fellowmen. If we have that, our narrow-mindedness will indeed be a virtue.

## CREATIVE ANXIETY

IT IS quite possible that some of you, just before you came to college or while you have been in college, met a sweet, kindly lady who said something like this to you: "Your college years are the happiest years of your life; enjoy them, for you will never be so carefree again." I remember having some such remark made to me. The interesting thing is that it sounds quite reasonable. One can draw up a good case to prove that the college years—even in war time—should be the happiest years in a person's life. Most students are enjoying more freedom than they have ever had before and perhaps ever will have again. Most of us looked forward to college as a time when we would no longer be bothered by the discipline of parents or the confining rules of a preparatory school. And some, after they have been out of college a few years, look back with pleasure on those days before they faced such problems as a nagging wife or an irritable husband, or those sleepless nights walking the floor with baby, or a desk full of unpaid bills that cannot be sent home to father. Yes, at first glance it would seem as though the sweet little lady is right and that college years are the happiest. Unfortunately, most of us know that is not true. College years are no happier than any of the years of our life.

L. P. Jacks, in his autobiography, says that he agrees with the remark Bismarck made at eighty to the effect that he did not recall a single hour of unalloyed happiness in the course of his whole life. Jacks goes on to say, "I cannot recall a single hour, not even in childhood, when I was entirely free from anxiety for the morrow, from discomfort, sometimes acute, sometimes faint, but always present, caused by uncertainty about what would happen next." Some of us would agree with that. I have had this point brought home to me watching my elder son. If anybody should be carefree, he should, for he has almost everything a boy his age could ask for. He should be perfectly happy, but sad to relate, he is not. I watched him recently playing on a trapeze with his friend. He should have been enjoying himself, but he wasn't because he was so anxious for fear his friend would do something he couldn't or did not dare do. And the result was that I had to send both of them down to the store to get some candy to save them from breaking their necks. But that is typical of his life, there is always something to worry him. His bicycle breaks and his day is spoiled. His friend has a better toy than he and it worries him because his father cannot afford to buy him one like it. Some of his playmates don't have to go to Sunday School and he does. And so his life goes on, one anxiety after another. And the sad thing is that is about the way his life will always be. And when the nice lady tells him, as he goes off to college, that he is going to enjoy the happiest, most carefree days of his life, she will be wasting her breath. As far as I know the only carefree people in this world are morons, and only a few of them get to college. One thing that seems to go hand in hand with intelligence is anxiety, and when we begin to find

ourselves becoming absolutely carefree, it is probably time to go to a psychiatrist, for something has happened to our minds.

Is it not true that anxiety is a natural and beneficial emotion in human beings? It is one of the reasons for the survival of the human race. It was because primitive man was anxious concerning his safety that he escaped the wild animals. This was what Henry Ward Beecher was thinking of when he said: "God planted fear in the soul as truly as He planted hope or courage. It is a kind of bell or gong which rings the mind into quick life and avoidance on the approach of danger. It is the soul's signal for rallying." It is certainly true that anxiety is a God-given gift to be finely used. It is closely connected with the will to live. When we cease to be anxious about anything we cease to have a reason for living.

Many people have an idea that there is something wrong with them if they are worried and anxious, when as a matter of fact there would be something radically wrong if they were not. I had a person say to me recently: "I think I'm losing my mind. I'm so worried about the war." My answer is that I think that a person would be losing his mind if he were not worried. A student came home from college and told his family he wasn't going back, and when they asked him why he said: "College is bad for me because I worry so much about my examinations." But of course college would be the wrong place for him when he stopped worrying over his examinations. Many people lose interest in Christianity because they do not receive from it peace of mind and the serenity of spirit which the New Testament seems to promise. In other words, they have an idea that Christ came into the world simply to make

people content and free from anxiety, when as a matter of fact Christ came into the world to make people anxious—anxious about the way they lived, the thoughts they had, and the deeds they performed. That is what He meant when He said: "Think not that I came to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace but a sword." Christ knew that it was only through creative anxiety of this sort that His Kingdom would be built; that it was only through an anxious striving for perfection that one found the inner peace He talked about.

However, anxiety is not simply a source of creativity which accounts for much of the progress of human life, it is also a source of destruction. One doctor put it this way. He said: "I am prepared to maintain that all the miseries wrought by sin and bodily sickness combined would not equal those we bring on ourselves through fear and anxiety." The truth of those words comes most vividly to light in war times, when the ravages of destructive anxiety oftentimes bring more painful results than guns and bombs. Carl Sandburg, in telling of the effect of the Civil War on various contemporaries of Lincoln, wrote this about the author Hawthorne: "Hawthorne went away to nurse his grief over the awful war game played out by men before his eyes, with a shame and depth of ignorance that overwhelmed him. From this grief Hawthorne died. . . ." Then Sandburg added this: "There were sensitive human spirits spun so finely that the war news, war imaginings, war chaos and its seeming lack of meaning, slowly wore away their life threads." But it is even worse today, because we have radios and picture magazines and movies continually storming our minds with all the horrors, and perils, and afflictions of the human race, until we

are apt to be shot to pieces nervously, and our minds filled with fear-ridden imaginings. So that anxiety, which can be healthy and creative, instead becomes a chronic, destructive force which not only weakens our morale, but can even destroy life itself.

A careful study of the New Testament reveals the fact that there was nothing which Jesus felt called upon to challenge more frequently than this destructive anxiety—fears which have gone out of control. Notice how many times in the New Testament the words “Be not anxious” and “Fear not” occur. Jesus recognized well that anxiety blinded men’s minds, paralyzed their faculties, poisoned their emotions, and even sapped their bodily strength, unless it was controlled. That is why He spent so much time warning His followers against it. I suspect that one of the greatest evils we face in America today is uncontrolled anxiety. There are plenty of signs of the havoc it can bring about, in Washington and in other parts of the country. The men and women in our armed forces do not escape it, and it does more to slow down civilian war activity than anything else. And of course we know nothing about it as compared with the people in occupied Europe. One writer just back from Europe, speaking of the Gestapo methods, says this: “It is this systematic terror, terror elevated to a science—that has given the Nazi rule a character of its own. For the terror hangs like a threatening sword over the head of every man, woman, and child without exception. I have seen courageous men go raving mad under it; I have seen the stoutest of heart commit suicide. Engulfed by this all-embracing terror, people simply do not know what they do.” So, in war-time this God-given emotion of anxiety which should be crea-

tive and the soul's signal for rallying, can become so destructive that people literally do not know what they do.

If the religion of Christ is worth anything it should be able to help us overcome this evil and control this emotion which can be the source of creative power within us. Paul, in his 2d Epistle to Timothy, used a sentence which seems to me to sum up the Christian approach to this problem, and shows why he was able to face so successfully the terrific strain and pressure he was under, and to conquer his anxieties. The secret of his victory over this evil is in the words: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." The first part of that sentence shows Paul as a man of action who kept himself so busy that he didn't have time to become a prey to fearful imaginings. There is no better cure for uncontrolled anxiety than hard work. We often speak of the fact that we are living in fearful times, but that is really just another way of saying that we are living in needy times, when there is a great deal of work to be done. In other words, the very anxiety that these times stir up within us should lead us to a path of practical action where we forget our fears in labor. Bernard DeVoto wrote an article some time ago criticizing the First Aid classes which have taken up the time of some three million Americans these past two years, and which he thinks have perhaps added a gratuitous menace to civilian life, and a new horror to air raids. For example, in a class he attended, one of the examiners proposed this: "The victim has a broken neck, arterial bleeding in the right arm, a compound fracture of the left femur, a crushed right foot, a long splinter of glass protruding from his chest—what would you do?" His answer was: "After six months of training I know

what I would do. I mark—with lipstick or iodine—a U on my own forehead, thus assuring myself priority in transportation to the hospital, and if I see a priest in the vicinity, on behalf of the victim I summon him before I pass out." While there is a lot of truth in his criticism, what he fails to mention is that First Aid classes have been one of the best ways in which civilians could forget their anxieties by engaging in a practical enterprise. I even like the spirit of that woman in Chicago who went to her war board and offered her services as an air-raid siren. There is so much work to be done these days that nobody has a legitimate excuse for being overcome by this evil. Bernard Shaw once wrote: "The secret of being miserable is to have leisure to bother about whether you are happy or not. The cure for it is occupation, because occupation means preoccupation; and the preoccupied person is neither happy nor unhappy, but simply active and alive, which is pleasanter than any happiness." That is the kind of thing Paul had in mind when he wrote: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course." Those are excellent words for all of us these days, for if we become men and women of action like St. Paul, what anxieties we have will simply spur us on.

Nevertheless, Paul's program of action was only half the story of his successful handling of this problem. The last words of the sentence are just as important. "I have kept the faith," he said. In other words, undergirding all Paul's activity was a lasting faith in God. There were times when it was tremendously difficult for Paul to keep this faith, just as it is tremendously difficult for us to have it in these war times. And yet without it no program of action we can devise amounts to a thing. The great prob-

lem that religion has always been concerned with is the fact that human beings weary in well-doing, that all programs of human usefulness and serviceableness sap our vitality. We need a source of inner power which can keep us going. Now Paul found, as all the great people of the race have found, that this power does not come to us so much as a result of our activity as our receptivity, not so much as a result of anything we do ourselves as something that everlastingly is—God. When he said, "I have kept the faith," all he meant was that in the midst of the turmoil and friction and darkness of the world about him, he still found enough evidence of divine purpose and presence to make him believe that there is a God who revealed Himself in Christ. And from that faith he received power to carry on. That is the essence of religion. We believe in God; and because we believe in Him, we worship Him; and because we worship Him, we receive power to overcome all needless anxieties and to live victoriously even in the most tragic times. One of the best examples of what I mean can be found in the last entries which Robert Scott made in his diary before he froze to death in the Antarctic. You will perhaps remember that when his expedition started to the South Pole, Wilson, the medical officer, had provided each man with a phial containing a deadly drug to be used when he found himself in dire extremity and was no longer warranted in prolonging his suffering. On their return trip they had gone about 890 miles when they were overtaken by an incredibly cold and blinding snow-storm. They crawled under a pup-tent with no fuel and no food, though there was a cache of both only ten miles away. Titus Oates, one of their number, finally said: "I think I'll go out and look around and see what the weather

is like." He went out and never came back. Scott wrote: "Oates is a brave man. He will not require us to watch him die by inches in the tent." And finally there was this entry sprawled by a pencil held in frozen fingers: "Too bad this is the end, but now that the end is come we are not going to take the drug which Wilson gave us. We have decided that the end shall be natural because we wish to prove to the world the power to endure hardness and suffering has not died away out of the English race." That is what Paul meant by keeping the faith, for such power as that comes from God.

## THE FELLOWSHIP OF COMMON NEED

SOME time ago I was driving from Northfield to New London, Connecticut, to preach at a girls' college there. On the way I was stopped by a state policeman. He asked me where I was going and I told him. Then he asked, "Are you going to see your girl?" I replied that I was a minister and I was going there to preach. He looked at me carefully for a minute and then he said, "Well, if you're a minister I'll have to let you go. But certainly you were driving along here as though you thought you were God Himself." I want to suggest to you that most of the troubles of mankind, like wars, have been caused by people who tried to behave as though they were God Himself—in other words by people who try to play God. In the Garden of Eden the serpent's promise in tempting the first man and woman to sin was, "Ye shall be as gods." And right down through the history of the race that has been the primary human temptation. "Mein Kampf" is the story of an individual who thought that it was the Aryan race's turn to be God. Mussolini is the pitiful picture of a man who thought it was his nation's turn to play God. The humanistic age which began in the eighteenth century and is now drawing to a close in this sorry anarchy of international and social wars is an example of what happens when an attempt is made to make a God out of

reason and nature. This desire to turn a human being or nation or an idea into God has been at the root of most of the misery and suffering of the human race. One philosopher put it this way: "Every man would like to be God, if it were possible; some few find it difficult to admit the impossibility."

However, there are many people who feel that this war has been the means of shattering our confidence in our ability to play God. Some go even further and think there are signs today of a great religious awakening. I was speaking with one of these people recently and his remarks were typical of this group. He said: "Isn't it significant that since July 1941 the three books which have led the list of best-selling novels were religious books dealing with man's relation to God—'The Keys of the Kingdom,' 'The Song of Bernadette,' and 'The Robe.' The sale of those books is an indication that Americans are returning to true religion." I think we must beware of people like that. Certainly nobody has been harmed by reading "The Robe," but I doubt if many of the people who have, are better Christians. The people who have been sent scurrying to their churches for the first time in many years, because they have been so overwhelmed by the horror of this war, for the most part have not been hurt by the experience, but it is doubtful if they are very much changed. Rather they are examples on a larger scale of the attitude of the boy who said his prayers at night but not in the morning, and explained by saying, "Any bright boy can look after himself in the daytime, but at night he needs some help." The signs of any real religious awakening in America today are rather scarce. Most of us are pretty well exemplified in that cartoon which appeared

some time ago in a weekly magazine. It pictured a crowded city street, and walking along among the people was a very peculiar-looking gentleman with a night-shirt on and a mangy-looking beard. He was barefoot and in his hand he was carrying a pole on the top of which was fastened a sign which read: "Are you prepared for eternity?" Walking beside him was a city slicker who was looking down at the man's bare feet, and saying out of the side of his mouth: "What are you planning to do with your shoe ration coupon?" I am inclined to believe that most Americans are far more interested in ration coupons than they are in the religious ideas expressed in those best-selling novels. This war has frightened most of us a little, but when it is over there is little to make one believe that we will not try to return to our self-confident ways as we did after the last war, and that once again we will go back to the game of playing God, which will be dangerous for us with such strong contestants as Russia and England.

Some time ago, at a religious discussion group held in an Eastern college, a young person asked this question: "What do you consider to be the parent of all sins?" That question produced a good discussion, some holding that selfishness was the basic sin, some that it was sensuality, and some that it was greed. But the interesting thing about that discussion was that none of those young people gave what might be called the Christian answer to that question. From Paul to Augustine and down to our own day the most consistent answer in Christian thought is that pride is the basic sin. Paul summed it up in the first chapter of Romans in the sentence: "Professing themselves to be wise they became fools and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to a corrupti-

ble man." Augustine said: "What could begin this evil will but pride, that is the beginning of all sin." And the same thought is expressed in the writings of Luther and Calvin and many of the outstanding theologians of our own day.

Unquestionably no better answer has been given, for it is pride which is at the root of all our troubles, personal, social, and international. It is pride which leads us to attempt to play God, which makes us behave as if all things centered in us instead of in God. Most of us, because of pride, will not see that we are no more important than the man next door; that our business is no more urgent than his. No lasting peace will ever be brought about in this world until each nation gets rid of pride and sees that she is no more important than her neighbor nation. All the squabbles in business, education, and politics are due to pride—one department, one person, feeling more essential than the rest. Alexander Pope once wrote:

Of all the causes which conspire to blind  
Man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind  
What the weak head with strongest bias rules—  
Is pride, the never-failing vice of fools.

Those words are true. Pride is the parent sin; it leads us to try to play God, to turn the glory of the uncorruptible God into the image of corruptible man. Therefore the greatest single task that each one of us faces, if we would lead happy lives and help to build a peaceful world, is to get rid of pride.

G. K. Chesterton, in his great book on Dickens, wrote this: "Dickens did not know, any more than any great

man ever knows, what was the particular thing he had to preach. He did not know it; he only preached it. But the particular thing he had to preach was this: That humility is the only possible basis of enjoyment; that if one has no other way of being humble except being poor, then it is better to be poor, and enjoy; that if one has no other way of being humble except being imbecile, then it is better to be imbecile, and to enjoy." As an example of this Mr. Chesterton took a character from Dombey and Son, Mr. Toots, who is one of the great Dickens characters. Mr. Toots was unquestionably a half-wit, but Dickens allowed him to keep the right half of his wits. He had everything external mixed up. He wore the wrong kind of clothes, he always gave people the wrong names, and never remembered who they were. But inwardly he wasn't mixed up at all, because he was humble, and with the clear eyes of humility he recognized goodness, and virtue, and truth wherever they were to be found. If Dickens could have been said to preach, it is true that in book after book and character after character he showed that humility is the only possible basis of enjoyment. Now this is one of the most important conceptions of Christ's way of life. So far as I know humility is the only virtue He claimed openly to possess. "For I am meek and lowly in heart," He said. And His continued references to it showed that it was a primary condition of entrance into His Kingdom. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." But to become poor in spirit, one has to get rid of pride, the basic sin, and there is no harder task than that.

Let's admit that it is impossible to get rid of pride by any direct approach—by trying to be humble. That method leads one to the position so well illustrated in a

modern autobiography where the author says: "I have never lost the childlike humility which characterizes all truly great men." The temptation to believe that we, by our own wills, can become humble and get rid of pride is the most insidious form of temptation. As the Devil says to his cohort in that grand book, "The Screwtape Letters": "All virtues are less formidable to us once the man is aware that he has them, but this is specially true of humility. Catch him at a moment when he is really poor in spirit and smuggle into his mind the gratifying reflection, 'By Jove! I'm being humble', and almost immediately pride—pride at his own humility—will appear. If he awakes to the danger and tries to smother this new form of pride, make him proud of this attempt—and so on, through as many stages as you please." The fortress of our pride can never be battered down by any direct assault. Coleridge wrote two lines which sum this up:

The devil did grin, for his darling sin  
Is Pride that apes humility.

It is the darling sin of the devil and that is why it is so hard to overcome. Granting that we cannot overcome our pride simply by trying to be humble, is there anything that we can do? In the history of the human race there have every now and then appeared a few outstanding people, like St. Francis of Assisi, who seemed to have been truly humble. And in our own lives we have every now and then met some person who has this characteristic and has gotten the best of pride. I am convinced that the one thing all these people have is a membership in what might be called the Fellowship of Common Need. Many of us seem to base our lives on achievement—our own, and that

of our family or our country. These truly humble people base their lives on need—their own and that of others. The members of the fellowship of common achievement have Little Jack Horner's philosophy of life, and after completing some task they say with him, "What a good boy am I!" The members of the fellowship of common need are just as pleased with their achievements, but it is a pleasure based not on self-gratification, but on service rendered to others. To overcome pride one must resign from the fellowship of common achievement and join the fellowship of common need.

In a recent autobiography, the author wrote this about a friend: "He loved humanity and the state, not as an abstraction but as a community of lovable and fallible human beings. He enjoyed the various comforts vouchsafed us in this melancholy vale; but he always seemed to sit loose to the things of Time. He lived his life as one who had a continuing vision of the unseen." Those sentences sum up well what it means to belong to the fellowship of common need, and to let God play God. One must love humanity and not as an abstraction. The best example of the kind of thing I mean is a story told about a leper colony in Massachusetts. A good many years ago the Commonwealth of Massachusetts kept its lepers, who were mostly sailors picked up on ships in various ports, at a farm not far from Plymouth. There was no one to care for them so a local doctor by the name of Parker took them over as a part of his rounds and cared for them. Finally the property holders around Plymouth went to the State House and said that they could not stand the lepers and that they would have to be removed. In time the government had to act and bought a little island at

the mouth of Buzzards Bay and moved the lepers there. Then the question came up as to who would look after them. The State Board of Health had no one who was willing to do it, and finally Dr. Parker said: "I have looked after them so far, I'll do it." So he said goodbye to his practice in Plymouth and moved to the little island, and for fifteen years, until the colony was taken over by the Federal Government and moved to Louisiana, he took care of the group and was the only man with health and strength to do anything for them. One day a dying Portuguese sailor requested to be confessed before a Roman Catholic priest. So Dr. Parker went to the mainland and persuaded a Portuguese priest to come to the island. The priest sat down beside the dying man and said: "Do you believe in God?" The sailor looked up and said: "I don't know whether I believe in God or not, but I believe in Dr. Parker." To love humanity that way, one has to learn to sit loose to the things of time, and have a continuing vision of the unseen. In other words, one has to be willing to let God play God, to recognize that it is He that has made us and not we ourselves, and by faith to walk humbly with Him.

For over one hundred years we in America have been slaves to our own greatness, bound by the chains of our pride. We have been fools who have tried to change the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image like to a corruptible man. Led by our own pride we have tried to play God, but without the benefit of omniscience. We have been active members in good standing of the fellowship of common achievement. Today our achievement lies before us in the sorry spectacle of a war-torn world. It is also the picture of a world in need—in need of men and

women who know that there still is one God who created them, and who dwells with them of a contrite and humble spirit, and who calls them to be His co-workers in carrying out His divine will. The future of our world depends on whether we are willing to join the fellowship of common need and to let God play God.

## TRIUMPHANT OVER TROUBLE \*

A FEW weeks ago a young man was walking on the East Side of New York and accidentally fell into an open excavation which was being dug to lay the foundation of a new building. It was broad daylight, and the young man was perfectly sober. It was purely an accident; he walked too near the edge and fell in. As he was struggling up the side of the deep hole to get out, an elderly gentleman who had witnessed the accident came over, bent down, and laid a fatherly hand on the young man's head, and said: "Don't be foolish, my boy, stay down there." Recently an old man said to me, "I'm thankful I'm not as young as you are, I should hate to live much longer in this kind of a world." Now the members of this graduating class are entering a world where there is that kind of cynicism in abundance. I graduated from school the year that most of the members of this class were born, and I can remember my elders congratulating me on the great opportunities for achievement, success, and happiness that lay ahead of me. Today many of your elders, instead of congratulating you, are going to feel sorry for you, and only hope that perhaps you will find a hole in the ground where you can hide yourselves and escape facing the horrible world they have created for you. You have a right to be angry with

\* A Baccalaureate Sermon

your elders, for it is they and not you who are to blame for this dark present in which you find yourselves living. You have a right to be cynical about the opportunities for joy and happiness which lie ahead of you. You can get into the frame of mind in which you honestly believe that there is no hope for the world, that human nature has exhausted all possibilities of greatness and goodness, and that the world is in a dark age of prolonged suffering, slaughter, and death from which there is no escape. Indeed, I read an article the other day in which the author proved conclusively, for himself at least, that this war we are now in is just a mild affair, a prelude to the next one which, as he says: "Will reach every nook and cranny of the world and reduce the human race to utter squalor and destitution."

The greatest danger which confronts not only the members of the Senior Class who graduate this week, but all of us here, is that we will fall a prey to this mood of sadness, disillusionment, cynicism, hopelessness, frustration—call it by what special name you will. All of us know that this is a disappointing kind of world for anyone to be living in. It is discouraging to live in a world torn apart by war and strife. And it is discouraging to contemplate the tremendous problems which all of us will be confronted with when the war is over. There are many intelligent writers today who think that this is the first time in history that people during a war have honestly feared the peace which is to come. We can gather together plenty of facts to prove that there is no hope for the human race. Those of us who are young can spend our time, if we so desire, in berating our elders who failed to correct the faults and winked at the abuses and disorders

which brought upon us this present chaos. That is the great danger we all face!

I think you may be interested to know the conclusion to the story of the young man who fell into the excavation. He climbed out and said to the old man: "Do you really believe that conditions in the world are so bad that I should remain in that hole?" When the elderly gentleman replied that he honestly thought so, the young man gave him a very polite shove, and the last he saw of the old man he was sitting very comfortably in the bottom of the hole. Now there is a lot to be said in favor of the attitude of that young man. The world is in a turmoil, but that is no reason for us to become cynical, and discouraged, and lose our faith in human possibilities.

One thing for us to remember is that the world has always been in a bad condition, and probably always will be. Apparently God did not intend the world to be a paradise where men and women could live in a state of continual bliss. Rather he placed us in a world full of tribulation where we must struggle and work and hope. That seems to be the point of living. In every age men and women have cried out in despair against the cruelty and hardship of life. And the ones who have cried out the loudest have usually been the ones who have clung most tenaciously to life. For example, in 1778 Wilberforce said: "I dare not marry—the future is so unsettled." But he got married the next year. In 1848 Lord Shaftesbury said: "Nothing can save the British Empire from shipwreck." But that gloomy prediction has not come true. On every hand in our day there are those who prove life is not worth living, though they go on living themselves; all around us there are prophets of doom whose prophecies

will never be fulfilled. We must never let our elders fool us into believing that there ever were any "good old days." But this need not make us cynical and disillusioned; it should rather be a challenge to us to see what we can do to bring about the necessary changes. Because the previous generation failed to create a peaceful world it does not mean we shall fail. Because the first World War did not bring about the results we desired, it does not mean that this present war is being fought in vain. St. Paul knew what it was to live in difficult times. But he wrote to his friends in Rome: "We also rejoice in our tribulations" or, as Dr. Moffatt translates the sentence: "We triumph even in our troubles." And notice Paul was not expressing a nice sentiment that he had composed in the quiet of his study. Those words were an expression of the way he lived, triumphant in trouble. Perhaps you have heard this letter which a young man wrote to his girl: "Dearest, I would climb the most precipitous and barbarous mountain to see the light of your eyes. I would swim any body of water far wider and wilder than the Hellespont to sit at your side. I would go through tempests and hurricanes to be with you for a moment. Yours forever. P.S. I hope to make a call upon you tomorrow, if it doesn't rain." There is the difficulty we all face. In the quiet and peace of this chapel it is easy enough to talk about how we will triumph over trouble, but so often the first rainstorm dampens our ardor. The days ahead of all of us are not going to be easy, but if we are willing to accept courageously the challenge they present, we will triumph.

Another thing to remember is that chaotic as the world may be, there is still plenty in it to make any life worth living. Most of you know the song entitled "The Best

Things in Life are Free." Have you ever thought that no matter how dark the world may become, no matter how devastating the destruction of war may be, these best things in life are never completely hidden or destroyed? In fact it is in times of great tribulation that many people see for the first time that the best things in life are the free things that they had overlooked before. When war came and it was necessary to ration things like gasoline and food some people discovered the joys of home life and having a garden and playing family games for the first time. Until this war many Americans thought that the only way to have fun was to get out of the home and buy pleasure in being entertained by others. But this war showed us that the pleasures that didn't cost a thing were after all the most satisfying. In the days ahead, all of us need to remind ourselves of this fact constantly. Though there are very dark clouds hanging over our world, there are still rays of sunshine seeping through. All we need to do is to think often of the lovely things in life which are ours and which nothing can destroy. Some time ago I came across a little book on Acting by a Russian writer, Richard Boleslavsky. In that book he tells a good story of a couple who had been married twenty-five years. They had married when they were very young. He had proposed to her one fine summer evening when they were walking in a cucumber patch. Being nervous, as lovers are apt to be, they would stop occasionally and pick a cucumber and eat it. In fact they made the happiest decision of their lives between two mouthfuls of cucumber. A month later they were married. At the wedding supper a dish of cucumbers was served—and nobody knew why they laughed so heartily when they saw it. Then long years of

life and struggle came; children and, naturally, difficulties. Sometimes they quarrelled and were angry; sometimes they became so depressed they didn't even speak to each other. But their youngest daughter observed that the surest way to lift these moods of gloom and sadness which came to her parents was to put a dish of cucumbers on the table and, like magic, they would become gay and happy and forget their troubles. In the next years we are all going to need something like that to lift us out of our moods of hopelessness and despair. One graduate of this school who is in the Armed Services wrote back here recently that what kept him going was his memories of this school and its lovely campus. Other people keep going because they have found in poetry or music or a hobby a joy which makes life worth living even in the darkest times. At least the best things in life are still free and are still all around us. If we are willing to search for them and find them, we can be triumphant in trouble.

In the last place, we can escape this mood of cynicism and disillusionment if we approach the problems we must face with what Wordsworth called "a wise passiveness." The reason that some of our elders are cynical and have lost their faith in the possibilities of human nature is that they have lived to see all their high hopes shattered. They hoped that the Prohibition Law would stop drinking in this country, that the League of Nations would put an end to wars, that the World Economic Conference would stabilize currency, that public education would blot out ignorance, and that the Church would christianize the world. Everything they put their hope in has failed. Is it any wonder that many of them are cynical and saying "What's the use?" But a person with a wise passiveness is

one who understands that the mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine, that Rome wasn't built in a day, that any great and lasting achievement requires a long-term faith. The cynics talk as though life on this planet of ours is ending, when as a matter of fact it has just begun. To make the figures simple, reduce the existence of our planet to one hundred years, and these are the extraordinary results a scientist can give. It took 98 of those 100 years to reach the first primitive agricultural stage. Writing began just a year ago, art and literature six months ago, Christianity four months ago, printing one month ago, electricity two days ago, and organized efforts for a world peace about five minutes ago. Why should anybody be disillusioned with life on our planet when it is just beginning? You and I are living in one of the darkest ages of history, but it is also one of the most exciting. Never before has a generation faced such opportunities as ours. If we have a wise passiveness we will be triumphant in all our troubles.

Now a patient faith, a wise passiveness, is not wishful thinking or superficial optimism or dreaming. Life is just beginning on this planet of ours, and the faith we need is that faith which says, "Because there are some lovely homes it is possible for everybody to have a lovely home; because there are some municipal governments run efficiently and honestly, it is possible for all cities to be governed that way; because some nations in the world have learned how to get along with each other in peace and harmony, it is possible for all nations to unite in a peaceful federation; and because in every age there have been a few people who have been able to rise triumphant over all adverse circumstances, it is possible for every

human being to do just that." You and I may never see all this come about, but at least we are given the thrilling task of trying to make such possibilities real.

The religion of Christ is built around the idea that in the world there is tribulation, but there is a way of living which overcomes it, and is always triumphant. Most of us haven't quite found that way of life any more than we have found the means of building the kind of peaceful world we want. That is still hidden from us. But the search is the glory and the meaning of living. In a poem called "The Explorer" one verse goes like this:

There's no sense in going further—it's the edge of cultivation,  
So they said and I believed it—broke my land and sowed my  
crop—

Built my barns and strung my fences in the little border  
station

Tucked away below the foothills where the trails run out and  
stop.

Till a voice, as bad as conscience, rang interminable changes  
On one everlasting whisper day and night repeated—so:  
"Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look beyond the  
ranges—

Something lost behind the ranges. Lost and waiting for you.  
Go!"

Beyond this present war with its wanton cruelty and devastation, there is something hidden—a community of peace-loving nations. Beyond our present greedy and selfish ways of living, there is something hidden—the Christian way of life. And the challenge each one of us faces is to go and find them. If we accept that challenge then we can say with St. Paul: "We triumph even in our troubles."

## CONTROLLING OUR JUDGMENTS

WHEN Jesus said: "Judge not, that ye be not judged," we cannot assume that He meant those words to be taken literally. For He did not take them literally Himself. The New Testament is filled with accounts of the judgments Christ made. Jesus knew, as we do, that it is inevitable in this life that human beings should hold opinions and express them. Almost every day of our lives we are called upon to make judgments. The other day I came across a book of paintings and drawings by Dali, and there I found a picture which had this title: "Picture of the debris of an automobile giving birth to a blind horse biting a telephone." After seeing something like that, I should hate to have anyone tell me that I am being unchristian when I make a judgment concerning that picture. Every time we read a book, or listen to music, or go to a play or a movie, it is but natural that we decide whether or not we like it and make a judgment about it, for if we did not do that it would be a sign that we were lacking in intelligence. I suppose the secret of successful living is simply the secret of making the right judgments. If one has that ability, one needs little else.

Jesus probably did not mean us to take the words "Judge not, that ye be not judged" literally for the critical faculty of human beings is a priceless possession. Criticism

has become such an important part of all art that it is a profession in itself. Most of us would be lost completely in the multitude of artistic creations which are produced each year if it were not for the critics who sort out the good from the bad and in general help us to make the right choices. The critic who went to a performance of King Lear and wrote afterwards of the actor playing the title role: "He played the King all evening as though under the constant fear that someone else was about to play the Ace," saved a lot of people time and money. So in the fields of literature and music the critics play important roles and it would hardly be just to say that their activities are unchristian. Rather it would be better to say that human beings who have been gifted with critical ability are unchristian if they attempt to hide that light under a bushel.

Or again we can agree that Jesus did not mean us to take those words literally when one considers the compulsion we are all under to make moral judgments. What a terrible world this would be if nobody dared to make a distinction between right and wrong. Think of a school in which the administration and faculty carried out to the letter the words "judge not." It would then be possible for a student to steal and lie and do anything under the sun, and when reported the headmaster would have to say, "I'm sorry, but it is unchristian for me to judge that act" and probably require the student to split the stolen goods with him. No, for the peace of mind and safety of all of us, we can be glad that it is the Christian thing to do to make moral judgments. If Jesus had not made moral judgments of the harshest sort we never would have heard of Him. Dr. Jefferson once wrote: "Who can read the

parable of Dives and Lazarus without feeling the fire of a holy scorn? Who can read the denunciations of the Pharisees without realizing that he is in the presence of a volcano belching molten lava? . . . Take away Jesus' capacity for indignation and you destroy the Jesus of the Gospels." Yes, the blazing judgments of Jesus are one of the most glorious features of His character.

If we cannot take these words literally, what was Jesus thinking about when He said: "Judge not that ye be not judged"? Some people say He was probably thinking of the fact that every time we judge someone or something we are also making a judgment on ourselves. The words which follow our text are: "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." Every time we criticize another person, we also record a judgment on ourselves. Have you ever noticed that it is very seldom that a really humble person brings a charge of conceit against another; a complaint against another's selfishness is seldom a sign of our own unselfishness; those who think others are intolerant are not often tolerant themselves. Byron's lines are a good example of this:

. . . as soon  
Seek roses in December, ice in June;  
Hope constancy in wind, or corn in chaff;  
Believe a woman or an epitaph  
Or any other thing that's false, before  
You trust in critics, who themselves are sore.

But after having penned those lines, he then wrote this about another poet, Southey, in an introduction to one of his own poems: "It hath been wisely said that 'one fool makes many': and it has been poetically observed that

'Fools rush in where angels fear to tread'. If Mr. Southey had not rushed in where he had no business, and where he never was before, and never will be again, the following poem would not have been written. It is not impossible that it may be as good as his own, seeing that it cannot by any species of stupidity, natural or acquired, be worse." Of course Byron did himself far more harm by that caustic criticism than he ever did poor Southey. The same is true of all of us. Our biting criticisms of others, our mean gossiping and our petty slanders record judgments against ourselves which are far more telling than against those at whom our remarks are levelled. Surely this is one direction Jesus' thought took when He said: "Judge not that ye be not judged."

Others say Jesus was thinking of the fact that making judgments, particularly about other people, is too often a subtle way of hiding our own faults and defects. One of the easiest ways of building up our own ego is to concentrate upon what is wrong with our neighbors, particularly those who are engaged in the same kind of work as we are. One minister told me that the first time he spoke to the patients in a hospital for the insane, he asked the doctor in charge whether there were any subjects which he should avoid. The doctor said: "No, talk about anything you want to, they will not take it personally but think you are talking about another person." The minister said he replied, "Well, if that is a sign of insanity you had better start enlarging your institution." It is easy to make judgments about other people because it helps us to cover our own defects. A famous English jurist was once on a committee to draw up some resolutions for the Queen. He discovered his colleagues had started with the words:

"Being conscious as we are of our own defects." He stood up and said: "Gentlemen, we cannot lie to her Majesty. Change it to 'Being conscious as we are of one another's defects.'" I have had people come to me after a sermon and say: "That was a fine sermon and it certainly did apply to Mrs. So-and-So." Longfellow once wrote in his diary: "John Ware of Cambridge preached a good sermon. I applied it to myself." The words, "Judge not that ye be not judged" are full of meaning when one thinks of how easy it is to get into the habit of finding the faults of other people so we can hide our own.

Still others say Jesus was thinking in this passage of how much easier it is to criticize and knock down than to construct and build up. It was as though He were saying, "There is no point in making judgments unless you can do something to correct the faults you find." Have you ever noticed that the harsh judgments Jesus made were never against people personally, they were always against the principles for which a group stood. He had a perfect right to criticize because He had something to give them to take the place of that which was wrong.

Those are some of the directions Jesus' thought took when He spoke those words: "Judge not that ye be not judged." But when we have found some of the truths contained in this statement we must admit that like so many other sayings of Jesus it is paradoxical. We are not to judge and yet at the same time life forces us every day to make judgments. One writer says this about the paradoxes of Jesus: "He attracted and riveted attention to His principles by putting them into paradoxes rather than into detailed codes and conventional prose. It has been whimsically remarked that a paradox is a truth standing

on its head to attract attention. We can hardly think of Jesus as deliberately resorting to literary acrobatics . . . to catch the public eye . . . but He was a pioneer and a poet and in both capacities He found paradox a legitimate and effective device for illuminating neglected aspects of truth and opening new paths of thought." It seems to me that this is just what Jesus was doing when He spoke these words about not making judgments. He probably listened to the back-biting, gossipy, mean criticisms of the Scribes and Pharisees, and decided that the only way He could get at that trouble was to make a startling statement which might cause His listeners to think, and so He said: "Judge not." But of course what He wanted His listeners to do was to control their judgments so that they did not sink to the level of quick censoriousness or disagreeable disparagement of others. Therefore our question must be: "How can we control our judgments and criticisms?"

In a criticism of a recent book were these words: "The author of this book writes in what the sixteenth century called a fit of spleen. There is not a single sympathetic character in the book. We cannot be as bad as all that, says the reader, and he is right, for he demands that in any book he shall follow the fortunes of some character sympathetically." Exactly the same is true in life. We must be able to follow the fortunes of people sympathetically, that is to say, to understand them and what they have been through in the past, and why they are the way they are. When we have done that our desire to criticize them usually evaporates. That was one power that Christ had, for so genuine was His sympathy that His judgments were never destructive, but always constructive.

Also, if we would control our criticisms and judgments,

we must be sure to make use of our sense of humor. As someone said: "Humor is a handy tool on the critic's workbench." I believe it is one of the most important. If, before making any judgments, we attempted to find the humorous elements of the situation, most of the bitterness and unpleasantness of our criticisms would completely disappear. Will Rogers, I suppose, was the best example you could find of just this point. It was the humor he combined into his most pointed remarks that disarmed the world. It was not that his comments ever missed the mark. There was usually stinging criticism in what he had to say, but his most acid statements were filled with such delicious humor that few ever felt hurt. One victim of his biting criticism remarked that Will Rogers was like a dentist who pulled your tooth first and gave you laughing gas afterward. Most of us fall far short of a sense of humor like this, and yet if we make use of whatever humor we have been gifted with, it will go a long way in helping to control our judgments. Have you ever noticed that while there is very little humor in the New Testament, for it was written by serious-minded men, nevertheless every now and then in all the seriousness of the writings there is a hint and an inkling of the quiet humor of Christ. For we can be sure Christ had a sense of humor which was of inestimable value to Him as He judged His fellowmen.

Finally, if we would control our judgments, particularly of other people, we must always remember to estimate other people not by what they have done, but by what they truly desire to be. That rule was the basis of all the judgments Christ made about other people. He never simply considered the wrongs and mistakes and sins they had committed, He always took the further step and tried

to find out what they really wanted to be. And in most cases when He found that out, He had no reason to criticize them at all. Many of us are far too ready to judge human character as either black or white. But it is seldom black or white, but rather moving to and fro through innumerable shades of gray. Do you know those lines which go like this:

In men whom men condemn as ill  
I find so much goodness still,  
In men whom men pronounce divine  
I find so much of sin and blot,  
I do not dare to draw a line  
Between the two, where God has not.

Jesus understood that, and so He based His judgments not on the errors of human beings, but on their true motives and intentions, and on what they really desired to be. That is the secret of the art of controlling our judgments.

Now, the interesting thing about these points for controlling our judgments is this: Anyone who really follows them finds himself, especially in his dealings with other people, very close to following Christ's words literally when He said: "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

## THE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

IN "Pickwick Papers" there is a scene in which Mr Pickwick suggests to Sam Weller that he is quite a philosopher. And Sam replies: "It runs in the family I believe, sir. My father's very much in that line, now. If my mother-in-law blows him up, he whistles. She flies in a passion, and breaks his pipe; he steps out and gets another. Then she screams very loud, and falls into 'sterics; and he smokes very comfortably till she come to agin. That's philosophy, sir, ain't it?" And Mr. Pickwick answers rightly that at least it is a very good substitute for it, which must have been of great service to Sam in his rambling life. Is it not true that most of us in our rambling lives find that we need a philosophy or at least a good substitute for it, if we are to meet at all successfully the problems we face? This is particularly true in difficult and chaotic days like the present. In times of peace and prosperity it is quite possible to live fairly happily without having much of a philosophy toward life, for one can drift with the tide of human affairs without getting involved in too much trouble. But in times like these it is impossible to drift with the tide; one has to try to determine some of the ends and purposes of life to find any meaning in living at all. I imagine that Sam Weller's father got along pretty well without much of a philosophy of life, until the

mother-in-law came to live with him, then he needed one badly. So today everyone needs to have some philosophy or attitude toward life, which not only makes life bearable but purposeful.

There are, I believe, three possible attitudes toward life. First, there is that attitude which says that nothing matters, that life "is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury and signifying nothing." I am not concerned with this view because it is absolute nonsense. We would all of us grant that life is a mystery, that nobody has ever been able to explain it. But it doesn't follow from that fact that life is meaningless. We could agree that it is easy today to be pessimistic about life. We could even agree with Bertrand Russell when he compares the sad look of apes in a zoo to the sad looks of human beings, both lost on the road of evolution and knowing that there is something better almost within their grasp. But because of that it does not follow that life is without meaning, or that it is as tragic as Russell suggests elsewhere when he says: "Brief and powerless is man's life; on him and all his race the slow sure doom falls pitiless and dark." Such a view takes in only half of life.

Two men looked through prison bars  
One saw mud, and the other stars.

Anyone who simply concentrates on the mud of life finds it meaningless. That is just as foolish an attitude as that of the person who simply concentrates on stars, and finds God in His heaven and everything right in the world, which is a superficial optimism that is also meaningless. There are two sides of life, and our philosophy must include them both. It has been said: "The first step in

philosophy is not a step; the first step in philosophy is to open your eyes. Not until he has looked around him, and with more than a little astonishment, in the actual world, not until he has in some measure become a 'spectator of all time and all existence' has any man a standing in the realm of thought. The majority of us are rustics, whose daily perambulations round the village pump mark the limits of our travel." The kindest thing which one can say about a person who believes that life is meaningless is that he is a rustic whose perambulations in the mud around the village pump have marked the limits of his travel. As Leibniz pointed out, our world is the best of all possible worlds and we had better accept it. Our choice is not between this world or the kind of world we think we should be living in, but between this world or no world at all. Hence since we must live in this world, we are far wiser if we do not denounce it and its creator but rather attempt to find a meaningful philosophy towards it.

Second, there is that philosophy of life which says that one thing matters above everything else. The people who hold this attitude place one thing in an exalted position and give their primary and whole-hearted allegiance to that. For example, I know a man who places his wife in exactly that position. She comes first and above everything else. It is very interesting to watch him at a dinner in his own home. When he cuts the meat he gives the choicest morsel to her regardless of the other guests. When he goes to an entertainment she must have the best seat even if he has to oust somebody else from it. Because she must wear the best clothes money can buy, he finds it impossible to contribute to any charities. And so it goes, for she is his idea of absolute value in life, and everything else must be

subordinated to her—which, of course, is very nice for her. Some people make an absolute out of private profit, and think that everything else in life is a tool to be used for that end. These are the people who do not recognize the rights of labor, or the need for art or religion except as they can contribute to private profit. They overlook the tenth commandment and know that anything which interferes with what they covet is evil, especially if it happens to be the government. Others make truth an absolute and never tire of shouting it from the housetops. "Nothing but the truth" is their motto, and while they become very unpopular in their communities and hurt and offend their friends, and even are known to have martyr complexes, truth still remains their absolute and they stick to their idea of it through thick and thin. There are some people who make peace their absolute. Everything else must be subordinated to the cause of peace. This is the point of view which says that it matters little if we lose liberty, justice, even democracy; as long as we gain peace. And then of course there are many Christians who make love their absolute. The fact that some of them have spoiled children, that they are an easy mark for unscrupulous schemers, and that they indulge in wasted pity and sentimentalism of the worst kind, does not bother them, for love is their absolute. They overlook the words of the Psalmist "ye that love the Lord hate evil," because they know that in the end love will conquer.

Now we know that people with this absolute position have accomplished a great deal in the world. But an absolute philosophy of this sort toward life is apt to be self-defeating. The man who makes an absolute out of his wife comes to a time when he finds he has few friends except

his wife, and her friendship is apt to become rather selfish and disagreeable. Private profit and prosperity as absolutes lead to a blind and brutal selfishness which in the end brings misery and depression. Truth as an absolute usually hardens into dogma which prevents the discovery of new truths. And even peace as an absolute seems to give an opportunity to the warlike to bring about the most cruel and hateful tyranny. In other words, whenever we take a virtue or a value and make it an absolute, it tends to become a vice or an evil. Justice is a value we admire, but make it an absolute, and you have people who are willing to lie, betray their friends, forget all about human kindness and love, all in the name of justice. As Portia told Shylock: "Earthly rule doth then show likest God's, when mercy seasons justice." Cleanliness is a fine virtue, but make it an absolute as some wives have been known to do, and a husband finds himself living in the cellar for fear of bringing dirt into the spotless house. Thrift is a fine virtue, but make it an absolute and it becomes avarice, for as someone said: "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Yet if we have become so thrifty that we have all the birds in our hands, there would be no singing in the bushes." It is possible to take almost any value or virtue and by making it absolute turn it into an evil or vice.

This leads us to the third attitude toward life, the one which says that there are many things which matter and we must take them all into consideration. Philosophically this is the attitude of pluralism or experimentalism, but I believe that this is also the Christian philosophy of life. It is the fact that Christ never boiled down His richly varied teachings to one principle which makes the task of

being a Christian so difficult. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I say?" It is because Christ taught many things according to the season and the occasion, that it is so hard to understand and simplify His Gospel. At times Jesus was filled with forgiving love, at other times denunciatory wrath; at times He asserted reverence for the law and the prophets, at other times He replaced their teaching and what had been said by them of old time, with commands of His own which were radically different; He said "resist not him which is evil," but then He used His own power and drove the money changers from the Temple. He cared tremendously for peace on earth good will toward men, and yet He had a prophetic passion for social justice; He commanded, "Give to him that asketh of thee" and yet did not comply with the financial request of the disinherited man; He said that one should rise above all financial considerations, and yet suggested that we "make to ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness;" and He said, "judge not that ye be not judged," and then proceeded to make stern judgments on the Pharisees. This is the reason why the Christian philosophy of life is not simple. The teachings of Christ make it plain that He thought many things mattered, and that it was impossible to take one virtue or one value and make it absolute. The nearest He came to make an absolute was with love, but it is clear that even this conception is not entirely absolute, for it is a love composed of many other values. In other words, I believe that Christ realized, and this perhaps accounts in great part for His paradoxical teaching, that no value, or virtue, or good is worth having if it means we must sacrifice all other values and virtues and goods. We cannot set up love as an absolute value,

because we must take into consideration a value such as loyalty; we cannot set up truth as an absolute, we must also think of humility and the "speaking of truth in love"; and we cannot make an absolute out of peace because we must take into account justice. Therefore the great task of formulating a satisfactory philosophy of life is the task of bringing all these various values and virtues into harmony with one another.

Aldous Huxley, in one of his books, has said: "It is difficult to find a single word which will adequately describe the ideal man of the free philosophers and the founders of religion. 'Non-attached' is perhaps the best." Then Huxley goes on to show that the ideal man is non-attached to bodily sensations and lusts, to a craving for power and possessions, to anger and hatred, to his exclusive loves, and even to wealth, fame, and social position. He ends with these profound words, which characterize the ideal man: "Non-attachment to self . . . with attachment to an ultimate reality, greater and more significant than even the best things that this world has to offer." Those words contain the Christian philosophy of life and the way in which we can bring the various values and virtues into harmony with one another. We can never understand the perfection of Christ's life by simply analyzing His virtues, we must take the further step and analyze the spirit which motivated those virtues. In other words the ethics of the New Testament is the ethics of the spirit. Bergson put it this way: "The morality of the Gospel is essentially that of the open soul." Christ gave us no blueprint of the good life, no definite rules which we must follow to be Christians, no scale of values, and no order of virtues to which we must attach ourselves. In His life and

teachings He tried to show men God, and to bring them into right and living relation with God. His philosophy of life was not expressed in codes or rules, it was expressed in the spirit of His living and dying, in His attachment to God. Christ's life was saturated with this consciousness of an incommunicable relationship with God, a unique union of His Life with the Divine. That was the master motive of His life which brought into harmony all the virtues and all the values for which He stood. At one time in his life Benjamin Franklin decided that he was going to become morally perfect. And so he worked out a plan in which he listed all the virtues he thought he should acquire, and charted them so that he could devote a week to gaining each one of them, and still be able to go over them all four times a year. But he failed in this great scheme and noted in his autobiography that he never did become morally perfect. Laudable as Franklin's plan was it was bound to fail, because one can never achieve goodness or perfection simply by self-discipline. When Christ said: "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works," He expressed the only way in which perfection can be achieved.

The Christian philosophy of life then is that attitude which states that all values and virtues matter tremendously and can be harmonized in any life only by the immediate presence of God. If through prayer and communion and meditation God has become a reality in our lives, then we need no code of laws or rules to follow to lead the good life, for our attachment to God gives us a quality of spirit which makes Christlike living possible. One of the best examples in history of a man who followed this philosophy of life with consummate success was

Abraham Lincoln. While many things mattered to him, his choices were invariably right, because his spirit was right. Notice that he never fooled himself by believing that God would speak to him directly, telling him in special emergencies which value should be emphasized. Do you remember that delightful scene when a minister from Chicago came to him saying that he had a message direct from his Divine Master commanding Lincoln to open the doors of bondage that the slaves might go free. Lincoln replied: "That may be, sir, for I have studied this question by night and day for weeks and months, but if it is as you say, a message from your Divine Master, is it not odd that the only channel He could send it by was the roundabout route by way of that awful, wicked city of Chicago?" As they left he added: "Well, gentlemen, it is not often one is favored with a delegation direct from the Almighty." Lincoln realized that God does not speak to men directly, but that He can work through those who open their hearts and lives to Him. There is no phrase in all his writing which sums up this philosophy better than those words in his second inaugural . . . "with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right." Those words contain the secret of the Christian attitude toward life. If what we do, if the stand we take in any given situation, is motivated by the conscious presence of God in our hearts and minds, then what we do is right, regardless of what the world may think. A life attached to God does not need to be attached to anything else, for such an attachment deepens the spirit and raises the intellectual and moral experience to a higher plane; in which all things become harmonized. Amiel once wrote in his Journal: "I realize with intensity that man in all that he does that is great

and noble is only the organ of something or someone higher than himself." That is the Christian philosophy of life which Christ summed up when He said: "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works."

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## THE SORROW OF THE WORLD

SOME time ago I was in a second-hand bookstore in New York, and I noticed a small book on the table entitled "The Sorrow of the World." Opening the book, I found it had been written some fifty years ago by a man who was the Bishop of Oxford. Though I had never heard of the book before, I bought it, not because it was by a bishop but because it was selling for ten cents. Soon afterward an eminent divine was staying in my home and I told him about the book, and though he was a Scotsman he immediately offered me a dollar for it and said he had been looking for a copy for years. Because of his enthusiasm for the book, I read it, and it was worth reading. It introduced me to a word which you never hear used today, which is not found in a small dictionary, and which I was not acquainted with. Many of you may not know this word either, and yet it is one which should be in all our vocabularies, particularly today. It is the word *accidie*, spelled a c c i d i e. The book I had paid ten cents for turned out to be an essay and a sermon on the sin of accidie.

Some of you who know your Dante well may remember hearing about that word. When Dante descends into the Fifth Circle of the Inferno, he finds there a black and loathsome marsh in which he sees the souls of those whom anger has ruined. They are smiting and tearing and maim-

ing one another in senseless rage. But there are others there, he is told, whom he cannot see, whose sobs make the bubbles which he can see rising in the muddy water. And the sin which has thrust them into the slime and fixed them there they explain in these words: "Gloomy were we in the sweet air, that is gladdened by the sun, carrying sullen, lazy smoke within our hearts, now lie we gloomy here in the black mire." This hymn they gurgle in their throats, for they cannot speak it in full words. That is Dante's description of the sin of accidie, which he characterizes by the word gloom. "Gloomy were we in the sweet air." But other writers have referred to this sin. Chaucer spoke of the bitterness in the heart which was the mother of accidie. This sin had a very important place in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, who thought of it as a wanton, wilful self-distressing, a sickly morbid weariness, and a woeful lovelessness. One of the earliest and best descriptions of it is found in the writings of Cassian, the celebrated recluse of the fourth century, and one of the founders of the monastic institutions of Western Europe. He considered this sin to be a weariness and distress of the heart, and he gives an excellent description of a monk who was suffering from it. He said it made the poor fellow detest the place where he was and loathe his cell. He had a poor opinion of his brethren and was sluggish and inert. And I like this—he said the monk dwelt on the excellence of other and distant monasteries and thought how profitable and healthy life was there, and how delightful the brethren were, and how spiritually they talked. And his mind filled with stupid bewilderment and shameful gloom. The nice thing about Cassian was that he felt that monks, because of their peculiar life,

were about the only people who suffered from the sin of accidie.

From the writings of the men who have described this sin it is plain that they agreed it was characterized in experience by gloom, sadness, irritation, weariness, and pessimism. Modern psychology has plenty of words to describe this state of mind in which a person falls a prey to melancholy and depression of one kind or another. I am in favor of returning the word accidie to our vocabularies because it refers to this gloomy state of mind as a sin, whereas all of the words used by modern psychology to describe the same state of mind refer to it as a minor illness of a physical or mental nature. The disappearance of this word accidie is a good example of a trend in liberal Christianity. There is a story told of a modern religious writer who wrote a long book on the meaning of religion, and when his friends pointed out to him that he had not mentioned the word sin in the entire book, he is said to have replied: "Oh well, there ought not to be such a thing." Modern psychology has helped some people to get into that frame of mind where they neglect entirely the word sin and account for all their weaknesses in psychological terms. When a man comes down to breakfast in the morning with an irritable and gloomy disposition and starts a fight with his wife over the coffee, which the poor woman has made that morning exactly the same as she has for the last five years, she is apt to say to herself, "Well, this is the result of John's cycloid type of personality," and let it go at that. How much more effective it would be if she turned to him and said: "John, you are suffering from the sin of accidie, and you had better do something about it." Or when we begin to feel like the monk that Cassian

describes and think that anything would be better than the job we have been called upon to do, that any house would be better to live in than ours, and that anybody else's children would be easier to bring up than the ones we have, few of us ever think of ourselves as sinning. I was reading a book the other day in which the author points out that there is no hope for the human race, that when this war is over the world is going to be in such a mess that there is nothing but chaos ahead. It would be a tremendous shock to that writer if someone went up to him and said, "My friend, the trouble with you is that you are suffering from the sin of accidie and you are headed straight for hell, where even your friends won't see you, because you'll be so far down in the mud and slime." Liberal Christianity in recent years has tried hard to get rid of the word sin and take a very complacent attitude toward human nature, and turn any uncomfortable problem over to psychology. While we must admit that psychology has been of tremendous help in extreme cases of maladjustment, it is nevertheless true that for the minor maladjustments of most of us religion should have the answer. Today many psychologists are beginning to agree with this, and as one of them points out, the reason religion has failed is because of its approach to the problem of sin which it has shunned and left uninvestigated. Too often Christian workers who recognize sin at all have simply left the problem to the Holy Ghost to settle.

My interest in the sin of accidie arises from the fact that probably never before in history has there been such an undercurrent of gloom among a people like ours who are being so victorious in the war they are waging. Almost everywhere I go somebody comes up to me and says some-

thing like this: "You know it is wonderful the way we are winning this war, but I shudder to think of the problems we are going to face after it is over. Conditions are going to be horrible." On every hand one finds this depressed and pessimistic state of mind. Of course there are plenty of reasons why we should be gloomy. The slaughter, suffering, cruelty, and barbarity of this war is enough to make any sane person down-hearted and affect one the way the French Revolution affected Wordsworth, when he wrote:

I lost

All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,  
Sick, wearied out with contrarieties,  
Yielded up moral questions in despair.

This was the crisis of that strong disease,  
This the soul's last and lowest ebb; I drooped,  
Deeming our blessed reason of least use  
When wanted most.

Many of us are sick and wearied out with contrarieties. Our world is in such a horrible condition that we seem to have every reason to be gloomy. But far too few of us understand that our suffering is not caused by the condition of the world, but by letting ourselves fall a prey to the sin of accidie. In the first chapter of Matthew there is a great sentence which is often overlooked. "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." That sentence shows that the very birth of Jesus was pictured against the background of man's sinfulness. And that sentence really sums up well what the New Testament is about. Jesus lived in a very chaotic world, but notice how little He had to say about it. He was far more interested in man's

response to the world he lived in. He tried to make him face himself and root out those hidden weaknesses which brought on all his unhappiness. He came not to save people from the world, but to save people from their sins. And so I say to you that the real sorrow of our world is not the war with all its devastating cruelty, it is not the pain, and suffering, and hardship we all find in daily lives; the real sorrow of our world which, as Paul said, "worketh death" is that we allow ourselves to be overcome by all this tribulation and fall a prey to the sin of accidie.

The bishop who wrote my ten-cent book did not seem to me to have very much help to offer to those suffering from this sin. He did, however, warn his readers not to confuse the condition brought on by this sin with a similar condition brought on by the wrong choice of food. In other words, the gloomy and irritable husband may not be indulging in this sin at all, but simply suffering from overindulgence of a physical nature. The bishop was right in making this distinction, for the misery of accidie hovers on the borderline between the physical and spiritual life. A person who is physically ill or overtired often feels very depressed. But that condition clears up immediately with the disappearance of the physical ailment. We should remember, however, that the sin of accidie is even present in physical sickness, or else how do you account for the fact that some hospital patients are so cheerful? In one of my pastorates I used to visit every week a man suffering from an incurable disease. But I never went to cheer him up. I went to be cheered. And he never failed. While it is possible to distinguish accidie as an ailment and as a sin, we are probably safer in assuming in most cases of gloom that we are face to face with sin.

Well, what can we do about it? How can we face the difficult problems of life in a war-torn world, and still keep a hopeful and even cheerful attitude? Some people say that one thing to do when this sin attacks us is to think of the far more difficult problems that other people are facing. Between ourselves I think that advice is a lot of nonsense. When I am depressed and gloomy, it has never given me the slightest help to think that my friend in a neighboring school is without doubt worse off than I am. In fact anybody who can get pleasure in gloating over the troubles of other people is suffering from a sin worse than accidie. A second suggestion sometimes made is that one can overcome this depressed mood by work. And that is a good suggestion except for the fact that the sin of accidie often leaves one in a condition of lassitude and laziness which prevents work, no matter how hard one tries. Now it is possible to think of many suggestions of this sort which can help in overcoming this sin. It is a good thing to consider how temporary these moods usually are, and how sometimes just a brief change such as a walk in the sunshine or visit to a friend will dispel them. But the fact remains that all the clever techniques you can think of cannot overcome this sin. That is the weakness in all the books which are published on how to live and how to make friends. Too often their thesis is that successful living is a matter of following some ingenious rules. But that is not true. Successful living is based on a quality of spirit and an inner attitude which is never acquired sitting in a comfortable chair reading an outline of six rules for becoming an extravert. A sin such as accidie is not something superficial which can be wiped away easily as a mother wipes the smudge off her child's cheek. One has to

recognize, as Paul did, that there is no easy way of deliverance. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" When one honestly feels that way, a comfortable chair is of no use. A man is forced to get down on his knees, and that is about the only way to grapple with this problem. When a person is faced with this mood of gloom and irritation and depression, clever techniques are of little value. Have you noticed that in this war our army and navy scientists and engineers can overcome almost any obstacle except bad weather. That is something whose coming they can predict, but over which they have no control. Exactly the same is true with our lives. Ingenious techniques will help us earn more money, get us more important jobs, and win us outward success, but they are of no use when the bad weather of accidie attacks our souls. Then we need the help of a power not our own.

Tennyson, in his poem "Enoch Arden," expressed beautifully the source of power which kept Enoch living even when he had lost everything. These are the words:

. . . resolve  
Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore  
Prayer from a living source within the will,  
And beating up thro' all the bitter world,  
Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,  
Kept him a living soul.

Resolve, and strong faith, and prayer are the weapons which can successfully combat the sin of accidie. And it is prayer which is the fountain that nourishes and keeps the resolve and the faith strong. There is no other way of overcoming sin. That was the secret of Christ's victory

over the world. And ignorant though the disciples were, they guessed that secret, and that is why the only specific thing they ever asked Him to teach them was: "Lord, teach us to pray. . . ."

We are living in the kind of world where it is easy to be gloomy in the sweet air, and where the sin of accidie worketh death. But there is a sure way of overcoming it, and that is the way of prayer. A man living in conditions far worse than any of us face in this country was asked to tell the secret of his quiet endurance. He replied: "When the house is dark, I do not try to sweep away the darkness with a broom: I light a candle." Prayer is a lighted candle.

## DIVINE DISCONTENT

You may have heard that little verse which goes like this:

Happy am I; from care I'm free!  
Why aren't all people contented like me?

I do not know how many of us are as contented as the poet who wrote that verse, but unquestionably many of us wish we were. More than almost anything else in this life, human beings seek contentment. We would be willing to follow anyone who could show us the secret of true happiness, who could tell us how to free ourselves from cares and burdens, and who could help us to become completely satisfied with our lives. Most of us have heard many sermons preached on that well-known text from Paul, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content." And yet is it not true that most of us find that the hardest advice to follow? We have never learned how to be content in whatsoever state we are. It always seems as though there were something lacking to make us completely happy, no matter how fortunate we may appear to be. I often think that the nearest most human beings ever get to contentment is thinking that they should be content. All of us have times when we say to ourselves, "Well, I should be happy and contented now," but for

some reason we know we're not. We are never entirely satisfied, for there is always something we want, something we are striving to accomplish, some task which needs to be done before our minds and spirits can be at rest. One writer says: "There is no such thing as contentment in the present tense. The most human beings can ever say is 'I should have been happy then,' when they look back on some glorious and successful experience, or 'I shall be happy when that happens,' looking forward to some event in the future. But never are they able to say 'I am contented now,' for life is not like that." Unquestionably there is a great deal of truth in that statement. This world was not designed for contented people. There is too much to challenge each one of us, there is too much work to be done, there are too many necessary changes to be made.

Human nature doesn't seem to have been designed for contentment either. We all have so many flaws in our make-up, so many weaknesses in our lives to overcome, so many hidden sins that need to be eradicated, that life is too short to ever enable us to reach a state where we could be satisfied with ourselves. You see even Paul, who said he had learned how to be content wherever he was, showed clearly in other passages how discontented he really was with himself, and the fact that he did all kinds of evil that he didn't want to do, and left undone the good he wanted to do. Yes, Paul was discontented with himself, and ever striving to attain the goal which was just ahead. He said: "Not as tho' I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, that I may apprehend." So with the lives of most of us. We are seeking to fulfill some goal, trying to satisfy our never-ending desires, attempting to live up to ideals we never quite reach, and

always hoping that just around the corner we will find contentment. But when we turn the corner the road of our hopes and desires and wishes seems to stretch out endlessly into the distance, and discontented we plod wearily on. Whenever you meet a completely satisfied and contented individual in this world, you can be sure there is something wrong somewhere, either you're dreaming or you have met an individual from another planet, for the great characteristic of all normal and healthy human beings is discontent. Even the poet who penned the verse we started with, in which he claimed to be contented, in reality showed his discontent when he wrote his second line:

Why aren't all people contented like me?

Perhaps the greatest reason for the advance and progress of the world since primitive times is this very quality of discontent. It is this characteristic of human nature which best differentiates man from beast. It is this characteristic which accounts for the progressive elements in man's remarkable evolution. In a recent article a scientist shows that discontent is the one attribute of man which accounts for his remarkable development: "For possibly a billion years innumerable species had lived and died without knowing the fermentations of this strange emotion. Not one had been dissatisfied, not one unhappy over the whole earth. For possibly a billion years their societies were never disturbed by unrest. . . ." And he goes on to show how this quality of discontent which suddenly appeared in human nature put an end to this primitive and complacent civilization, and made possible man as he appears on our earth today. Now while there are unquestionably

many external reasons for man's development, nevertheless it would be foolish to deny the important part played by the quality of discontent. Our great scientific achievements, our great mass of new knowledge and learning, in fact the outward progress throughout the centuries in every field of human endeavor, has been brought about by men and women who were dissatisfied and discontented with things as they were, who were unwilling to accept the status quo, who longed for change, and who were willing to dedicate their lives, and to forsake their own comfort and peace, for the advancement of civilization.

However, not only is discontent an outstanding characteristic of human nature, accounting in great part for its wonderful development, but it is also a sacred obligation on the part of every Christian. Unless we possess this quality we are not Christians. I am sure somebody will say to this, "Haven't you forgotten that you are a Christian preacher and that Jesus said 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.' For Christ came into the world to show people how to be contented and peaceful and happy, and not to make them discontented." I agree that Jesus did come into the world to help people gain that peace which passeth all understanding, but far too few of us ever consider how Jesus thought such a peace and contentment was to be gained. Many Christians interpret Jesus in terms of restfulness and peace to console themselves for the stagnant, complacent, and tired lives they are leading. The charge is often brought against Christianity that it is an opiate of the people, and lulls them into a false contentment and satisfaction with themselves and their lives. Unfortunately that is sometimes true. But Christ's message was never intended to make his followers self-satisfied,

self-righteous, and completely contented. No, paradoxical as it may seem, the peace Jesus tried to bring was an inner stability and power, which could only be possessed by the person who was discontented. He tried to explain it to His disciples when He said, "I came not to send peace but a sword." As the context makes plain, He did not mean a literal sword, but He did mean something like discontent. It was as though He said: "I came not to make you people contented with yourselves and the world you live in, but discontented. That is your sacred obligation as my followers." Jesus came into the world to change men, to make them realize their divine sonship, and their divine destiny. But He knew that to change men, you had to first make them dissatisfied with themselves, and the lives they were living. He came to make men perfect. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." But He knew you never could become perfect, until you first realized your imperfections, until you first became discontented with yourself and your world.

This is a side of Christianity that we are apt to overlook in our natural longing for peace and contentment. But if we are to become true followers of Jesus Christ, then we must be dissatisfied with everything in ourselves, or in the world, which goes against the principles for which He stood. It is our duty as Christians to be discontented with a war system, to be discontented with the injustices and cruelty of our economic order, to be discontented with racial prejudices and wrongs, with cheap moral standards, with the unfortunate divisions within the Protestant Church, in fact with everything in our world which goes contrary to the spirit of Christ. But even more important it is our duty to be dissatisfied with ourselves, with our

pettiness and meanness, with our selfishness and thoughtlessness, with our pride and unfriendliness, in fact with all those weaknesses which mar the lives and characters of all of us. When Charles Kingsley said: "I should like to make every man, woman, and child whom I meet discontented with themselves, even as I am discontented with myself," he was pointing out the great obligation of every Christian.

Granting that discontent is the characteristic of the human race which accounts for the almost miraculous development of man, and granting that to be discontented is a primary obligation on the part of every Christian, there is still another very important side to this problem to consider. Think carefully for a moment of the people you find it very difficult to like. Are they not often the people who are always complaining about something which does not suit them, who are always grumbling in the home because things aren't just as they should be, who are always dissatisfied with any group they belong to because it's not run the way they know it should be, and who are always groaning and lamenting and whining over their lot in life and the world in general? In other words, are not the people we dislike most the discontented people? If this is true, it presents us with a grave problem. If the sermon ended here, what a chance it offers for some to go home from church and complain about something at home, and then say, "Well, the minister told me it's my duty as a Christian to be dissatisfied." Think of the people who could complain about the way the organizations they belong to are run, and then say, "Of course I don't mean to be disagreeable, but it's my duty as a Christian to be discontented." What is the solution to this problem, for

we cannot very well be discontented and not be discontented at the same time?

The solution is of course a matter of definition. There are varieties of discontent, just as there are varieties of love. The discontent that Jesus came to bring men was not petty, mean, complaining over little things, it was not a dissatisfaction because we do not get our own way, or because things do not run smoothly for us, or because other people do not understand our brilliance or our delicate natures. There was nothing small, or selfish, or disagreeable about it at all. No, it was what has been beautifully called a Divine Discontent, divine because it comes from God. It is a high and lofty discontent, which is the result of our vision of what we might be, and what the world might be. Anyone who has caught the spirit of Christ's way of life has caught a divine discontent also. When we have had a revelation of the perfection of Christ's life, we will never be contented till we have gained that perfection also. When we have a vision of the perfection of Christ's teachings, we will be discontented until the world is really run on those principles. But there is nothing ugly or despicable about it, for it is glorious and beautiful, because it is divine. It will not allow us to lower ourselves into any of the petty forms of discontent which cause so much unhappiness in our lives.

It is certainly true that the people who have been the greatest, and the happiest, and the most successful in the history of the world, have been those who have possessed this quality of divine discontent. Christ had it to a supreme degree. In fact so discontented was He concerning sinful humanity, that He gave His life that the human race might become perfect. And history is the record of

the lives of men and women of all ages who have been filled with this divine discontent, and who have given their lives for the vision they had of perfection in some field of human endeavor. In Van Loon's book entitled "The Arts," there is this revealing passage: "Michelangelo's greatness lay in his divine discontent—not with others but with himself. Like all the great of this earth, like Beethoven and Rembrandt and Goya and Johann Sebastian Bach, he was of such mighty stature that he knew the meaning of the word 'perfection.' And like Moses, glancing longingly at the dim and hazy outlines of the Promised Land, he realized that it will never be given to any of us mere mortals to reach that which cannot possibly be surpassed. Hence that divine discontent, which is not only the beginning of all wisdom, but also the beginning and the end of all great art," and he might well have added, "of all great living." For divine discontent, the desire to strive for perfection, is indeed the beginning and end of all Christian living. When Jesus said: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," He gave us the motto of every Christian life. Just as Paul really caught the spirit of those words, so can each one of us. And then we can say, with him: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

## IT'S HARD TO BE GOOD

SOME years ago there was a popular song, the name of which I have forgotten, but it had these words in the refrain which were repeated a few times: "I want to be bad." Probably the people who sang those words didn't realize they were not expressing the truth, because most human beings really want to be good. Teachers, and those connected closely with the education of youth, sometimes find this hard to believe, for the desire for goodness in some young people is pretty well hidden. However, I have never heard a young person, when asked why he or she did something wrong, reply, "Because I want to be bad." More often than not the answer is some form of the text: "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." Most of us, like Paul, desire to be good, and yet we find it a great deal easier to be bad. I suspect that this desire to be good has something to do with conscience. Somebody once defined conscience as "the voice of the repressed good," which is an excellent definition, for our consciences seem to keep before us an image of possible goodness that haunts us continually.

Besides this, most of us want to be good because we know that goodness pays large dividends in happiness and security and lasting satisfaction. Now and then it is possible for us to rationalize our badness and try to prove to

ourselves that it has been educational or exciting and hence worthwhile, but usually we realize we are just fooling ourselves. A good many years ago my father wrote a book called "The Disadvantages of Being Good." In that book he gave a detailed description of his twin son and daughter in the first years of their lives. In the best part of the book, at least from my point of view, he showed how his son was the most perfect child imaginable, who never was bad and whose only desire was to be good and make things as easy as possible for his parents. The twin girl was just the opposite. She was as bad as she could be, always in mischief and trouble. Then he asked which child the reader thought had a better time in life, and answered by pointing out that the girl did, for she got all the attention, was first to be fed, first to be picked up, first to get new toys, and all in all, though she was very bad, she had a far pleasanter existence than her brother. But what he forgot to point out was the fact that she also received all the spankings. In other words, when her badness passed the cute stage, then her existence wasn't as pleasant as that of her twin brother. In that book, however, my father was making an excellent point; namely, that there are some kinds of goodness that are worse than some kinds of badness. Dr. Fosdick has expressed the same idea: "You know yourselves that there are some kinds of good people whom you would walk blocks to avoid meeting." He mentions the conventionally good, the negatively good, the censoriously good, and the narrowly good, and speaks of how dreadful they are. We would all agree with him. But it is not that kind of goodness we are thinking of. For there is a healthy, attractive, and interesting type of goodness which is always better than any of the most

original badness the mind of man can concoct. History shows us that in the long run this kind of goodness pays. It is this knowledge which keeps most of us from ever proving to ourselves that our badness is worthwhile.

Our desire for goodness also springs from a recognition of the fact that only through a good life can any real contribution be made to the betterment of our world and our society. Nobody knows what the meaning of life is, but most people sense that one purpose at least for our existence is to make the world a little better place because we have lived in it. And that we know can only be done by a good life. Of course it is possible to rationalize this point. Bertrand Russell wrote an essay called "The Harm Good Men Do." In that essay he showed that King George III was a good man with no personal bad habits, and yet was the cause of the American Revolution; and that the ex-Kaiser, a good and religious man, was a cause of the World War. But of course he could not prove that they would have done less harm if they had been bad, any more than he could prove that they had much to do with the cause of the wars of their generations. Tolstoy's thesis in "War and Peace" is much the same—the outstanding men of any generation have little to do with the causes of the great events of their time, but are more often the tools of tremendous hidden forces. The personal goodness or badness of Napoleon had little to do with the causes of the war he fought, just as Hitler's badness has little to do with the cause of the present war, both men being swept along by deep currents rising from many sources. But Bertrand Russell knew this, and his essay had little to do with its title, for what he too was really making a plea for was a healthy kind of goodness instead of a stale, oppressive, and

negative morality. Most intelligent people agree that the great contributions to the human race have not come from bad men and women but from those who led good lives. And especially those of us who are not geniuses will probably agree that we come nearest to fulfilling the meaning of our lives and serving humanity by being good.

But granting that most of us want to be good, why is it that like St. Paul we are continually confronting situations where we say with him: "For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil that I would not, that I do." Why is it so hard to be good, especially when down deep we know that all the best things in life are the result of goodness? Why is it so much easier to lie than to face the consequences of truth, when we know that a single lie usually involves us in a chain of lies, one of which is eventually found out? It is interesting to note how some children, when caught in a wrong act, will do almost anything but tell the truth. One mother said in quite a sweet voice to her little boy, "Did you take that piece of fudge from the plate on the table?" He hesitated for a minute, and the mother, hopefully expectant of the truth, heard these words: "I don't think so, mummy, it just seemed to fall into my hands." Most human beings do not want to be dishonest, they do not want to lie, they do not want to be prejudiced and mean and hold grudges, and yet often the very evil that they would avoid, they find themselves practising. Why is it so hard to be good?

Some of the most profound theological problems are related to the answer to this question. After all, the doctrine of original sin is the strictly theological answer. According to that, somewhere in the dim past, whether in the Garden of Eden or elsewhere, the human race took a

wrong turn and ever since it has been hard for human beings to be good. But I am not concerned with this interpretation. All of us would agree that due to some fall from grace or for some other reason the human race will never be perfect, but at the same time we know, too, that human beings could be a lot better than they are now. If we answer simply and honestly this question as to why it is so hard to be good, we may find some ways of improving our lives.

For one thing it is hard to be good because most of us have been brought up to believe that goodness is a duty instead of a privilege. I remember well that when I went to dancing school my mother told me that it was my duty, particularly as a minister's son, to dance with those girls standing around the walls without partners, known as wall-flowers. And I often had to do it if my mother was sitting in the little balcony with the other mothers, overlooking the dance floor. But, as I remember, because it was my duty to do that it was always hateful to me. Is it not true that goodness has often been made synonymous with duty, and hence it becomes a very difficult achievement? Most of us dislike the things we think it is our duty to do. Right here we have one of the differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Ten Commandments are negative—thou shalt not—and express duties we must perform. The Beatitudes of Christ, on the other hand, are positive and express privileges which are ours if we take advantage of them—Blessed or happy are ye, if you do certain things. Notice that Christ never made goodness negative, He never asked people to do things because it was their duty. No, He made goodness positive, and tried to show that the good life was an

adventurous privilege which was theirs if they so desired. I think parents and educators are to a great extent to blame for the fact that most of us find it hard to be good. They introduced us to goodness in the wrong way. Don't do this and you'll be good was apt to be the parental attitude, which made it seem that goodness was always the opposite of everything which was fun. Moreover, the reason for being good was usually based on an authority we didn't fully understand or care about—divine authority. Walter Lippmann has said: "The very thing which gave authority to moral insight for our forefathers obscures moral insight for us. They lived in a kind of world which disposed them to practise virtue if it came to them as a divine commandment. A thoroughly modernized young person today distrusts moral wisdom precisely because it is commanded." In other words, if it had been suggested to me in a positive way that it might be nice if I danced with those girls sitting around the wall, who were not quite so attractive but apt to be more intelligent and interesting; or if it had been pointed out to me that by trying to give them a good time I might get more lasting pleasure than if I simply went out after my own good time—if the approach had been that instead of a definite command to duty, I might have done it willingly.

Then of course some parents introduced us to the idea of goodness, not simply by command but by force. The classic example of this method is found in the famous sermon on purity by Dr. Keate, headmaster and terror of Eton boys: "It's your duty," he said, "to be pure in heart. If you are not pure in heart, I'll flog you." But of course flogging is no more effective than the appeal to duty or authority, for goodness is not something that can be forced

from without—at least the attractive kind of goodness we are thinking of. We enter on the good life only when we see for ourselves, or have been made to see by others, that goodness is a privilege which the centuries have proved is worth accepting.

In the second place, many of us find it hard to be good because we are under the impression that goodness is the result of our own will-power, and that if our will-power is strong enough we can be good. In other words, if we keep repeating, "I'm going to be good," "I'm going to be good" over and over, eventually we will be good. There is nothing further from the truth. While it is true that one has to desire to be good, and cannot be indifferent to goodness, at the same time nobody ever achieved goodness through will-power alone. Goodness, like happiness, is never gained by direct assault, but indirectly through the power and compulsion of great affections or inspirations. For example, suppose you had a bad temper which you wished to overcome. You concentrate on that bad temper and determine to get rid of it yourself. But the harder you try, the worse your temper becomes, until you are ready to give up in disgust. But let us suppose soon after your decision to correct your bad temper, you fall in love. Your temper is apt to become very sweet in a short time. That is what a great affection can do for anyone. Psychologists tell us that it is not our wills which determine the kind of people we are, but it is our affections, our mental images, the kind of thoughts we have, and our inner spiritual companionships.

St. Paul is the best example of this point. Before he came under the influence of Christ he tried hard to be good and he failed miserably. But once Christ took pos-

session of his affection, everything which had been so hard became easy. That is what he meant when he said, "To me to live is Christ," for the power to accomplish his great work was generated by his love for Christ. So with all of us. Every human being has this capacity to be inspired by someone or some cause outside of his life, which makes the problem of being good comparatively easy. This is one of the underlying thoughts behind Christianity. The Christian religion is simply the attempt to give each one of us ideals which can inspire us, and more than that a personal Christ who can rightly claim our love and affection, so that we have no choice except to lead the good life. This is the conception of goodness which Christ had. He knew that goodness was never the result of a person's will; but the result of his nature and his spiritual resources. That is what He meant when He said: "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."

Finally, as I have hinted already, it is hard to be good because most of us have a very stuffy and old-fashioned idea of what goodness is. One writer puts it this way: "We need a morality based upon love of life, upon pleasure in growth and positive achievement, not upon repression and prohibition. A man should be regarded as good if he is happy, expansive, generous, and glad others are happy."

I think that is true. Too many of us have unconsciously taken our conception of goodness from our Pilgrim forefathers whose goodness was based pretty much on repression and restraint. Their idea was that if you went to church three or four times on Sunday, if you didn't dance, and if you were never frivolous or carefree, then you were good. But that is not goodness at all. The good life should

be the happy and interesting life. That is what the little girl had in mind when she prayed: "Dear Lord, please make all bad people good, and all good people interesting." And she was right. The most important part of the parable of the Prodigal Son is the part about the elder brother. You could draw up quite a case to prove that the reason the prodigal son left home was because he could not stand the stuffy goodness of his elder brother. At least it is clear that Jesus was trying to show that the self-righteous type of goodness of the elder brother was in some respects worse than the downright wickedness of the prodigal son. If our goodness does not make us happy and expansive and interesting, then it is not goodness at all. Jesus said: "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Throughout the ages the truest followers of Christ have always possessed a joyful kind of goodness. You often hear it said that real religion cannot be taught, it must be caught. I am not so sure that is true, for in one sense at least religion can be taught, and if that isn't true many of us would be out of work. But what I am sure cannot be taught is what true religion should lead to—namely, a good life. A good life cannot be taught, for the joyful goodness we have been thinking of is caught, caught from great ideals which inspire us, from earthly friends we love, and most of all from fellowship with the great unseen friend whose face we see in the face of Jesus Christ.

## THE SOURCE OF HOPE

ROBERT BRIDGES wrote in one of his sonnets: "I live on hope and that I think do all who come into this world." Most of us would agree with those words. Our lives are determined to a great extent by our hopes. As long as we have something to hope for, life is fairly meaningful. But take away our hopes and life becomes almost unbearable. I have often wondered if that mysterious entity known as the "will to live" which resides in all normal human beings is not after all simply hope. The reason that we can face and even overcome the great obstacles and tragedies which enter all our lives, is this surmise deep within us that there are better days ahead. It is because most of us have a little of Mr. Micawber's philosophy about something better just around the corner which is certain to turn up, that we find it possible to keep going. We must agree with Paul when he said: "For we are saved by hope" for it is hope which saves us from cynicism and pessimism and disillusionment, and opens the way for us to live adventurous lives in which we have an opportunity to share those glimpses of happiness which make life worthwhile. Emily Dickinson wrote a lovely poem about hope which contains these two verses:

Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,

And sings the tune without the words,  
And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard,  
And sore must be the storm  
That could abash the little bird  
That kept so many warm.

As long as hope perches in the soul, life is usually sweet. Most of us have found that it does sing loudest when the storms are the worst, and there are few gales which can stop the singing of that little bird.

However, is it not true that we find ourselves living in the midst of a world storm today which has muffled the singing of that bird in some, and apparently killed the bird outright in others? I suspect that there have been few times in history when it has been more difficult to maintain a hopeful outlook on life than it is today. One dreadful consequence of this Second World War is that it seems to have shattered our hopes. The main reason for this is that our hopes rose so high during the First World War, which we honestly thought was going to make the world safe for democracy and be the war to end all wars. Lewis Mumford puts it this way: "We expected that at the end of that fierce and rancorous conflict . . . the beat of angels' wings would at once be heard in the sky and concord and brotherly love would immediately settle over the earth. That lack of realism was fatal to us; that too-virtuous idealism, that too-exacting purity, is even now taking its toll in cynical inertia." And that is true. Most of us expected that the last war was the end of the story and were sure we would find the words "and they lived happily ever afterwards." But instead the words really

were "to be continued." It is true that our feelings today magnified many times are about the way they are when we read a story in a magazine which we think is complete in that issue, only to come to the annoying words "to be continued." It is hard, to say the least, to find ourselves not at the end of the story but in the middle of another chapter, far more horrible than the first, and with the almost certain knowledge that the end of this chapter will not contain the words, "and they lived happily ever after," but that once again we shall read, "to be continued."

Nevertheless, our discouragement and pessimism are not simply due to the tragedy of war and our doubts about its bringing any permanently good results, but to the realization that our philosophy of life from which we thought we derived our hopes has been false. Many of us based our hopes on a kind of optimistic humanism which led us to hold a very exaggerated estimate of man and what he could accomplish. For one thing we placed our hopes in scientific inventiveness and the great possibilities of science giving us a more abundant life and helping us to build a better world. To many it seemed as though there wasn't anything which science could not accomplish. Today we look out on a world which is a vivid picture of the tragic misuses of scientific gifts. And worst of all is the fact that the comforts and luxuries and conveniences which science gave us and which we were sure were signs of a better world, are being taken away from us that science may develop more horrible war machines to destroy that world. What a prophetic indictment of our civilization were those words of Thoreau as he sat in his hut and watched the men nearby putting up telegraph wires and said: "We are in great haste to build a magnetic

telegraph from Maine to Texas, but it may be when it is finished Maine will have nothing to say to Texas, and Texas nothing important to tell Maine. All our inventions are improved means to unimproved ends."

For another thing, we placed our hopes in education. With the tremendous development of schools and universities was bound to come a great advance in culture. When the majority of our people were highly trained and educated then there would be few problems which could not intelligently be solved. A century ago Horace Mann said that crime could be eliminated simply by the increase of educational opportunities. But our great secular educational system has not turned out to be any panacea, but like science an improved means to an unimproved end.

Then there were some who pinned their hopes on the church. Surely the Christian church with its magnificent buildings and lovely services and pious folk could usher in a new age of brotherliness and fellowship and peace. But unfortunately the church has not proved itself strong enough to do that yet. Richard Niebuhr writes: "The church has seen all mankind involved in crisis and has sought to offer help—only to discover the utter insufficiency of its resources."

One by one those things which apparently were the source of our hopes have failed us, and the evidence of our world makes it seem as though our hopes were but vain and childish dreams. Surely it begins to look as though everything we have hoped for has been or is about to be smashed. It is not hard to find reasons for being pessimistic and cynical today. How can one be hopeful, living as we do in the midst of one of the darkest ages in history? Somebody might say at this point: "Well it seems

that if Paul is right and we are saved by hope, and you are right that our hopes have all been shattered, that you must either tell us that we are all damned or suggest that we go out and shoot ourselves." Logically you would be right. If we are saved by hope and we have nothing to hope for, certainly there is not much reason for living.

Have you ever noticed that the greatest pessimists, who are always complaining about the world and proving that there is nothing worth living for, are very often people who eat three square meals a day and sleep eight hours at night and who never seem to let their pessimism interfere with their enjoyment of living? When Bertrand Russell wrote: "Brief and powerless is man's life, on him and all his race the slow sure doom falls pitiless and dark," logically he should have jumped out the window after writing it. But he didn't. Instead he has gone on living fairly happily. One of the interesting things to most people in Steinbeck's book "The Moon Is Down" was that hauntingly sardonic refrain "the flies have conquered the fly-paper." Many of the books about the fall of France or Poland or Norway have expressed very logically the futile bravery of the subjected people and the frightfulness of the conquerors. But what made Steinbeck's book great was that he didn't do the logical thing, but instead transposed his values, and showed the conquerors to be the frightened ones, and the victims of the assault, who logically should have broken under the strain, to have had a spirit which could not be broken. I think historically and psychologically he was right. Human history is full of instances in which the conquered have finally pulled the conqueror down. At least there has been illustrated in that book a very profound fact—that it is impossible to

deal logically with the spirit of man. We can prove logically that we have no basis for any hope today, and yet I do not believe there is a person who reads this who down deep in his heart is not hopeful. Logic has nothing to do with the spirit of man, which is the reason the pessimists continue to live quite happily and a man like Schopenhauer lived to be seventy-two. Paul had this in mind when he said "For we are saved by hope," and then added: "But hope that is seen is not hope." In other words, the hope we are saved by is something deep within the spirit of man which is not dependent upon anything which is seen. Much of the mental confusion of people today lies in the fact that they have thought that the source of their hopes was such outward things as science, education, and the church. When those things failed they are fearful that nothing is left but despair. But the interesting thing is that even in their despair, many of them remain hopeful. The reason for this is that the source of hope is not found in outward things about which one can dispute and study and argue, but in the spirit of man about which one can say very little.

In the Epistle to Peter there are these words: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." Is it possible to give an answer to that question? Those of you who are familiar with Browning's poetry know that one of its characteristics was the optimistic view of life it expresses, illustrated in those familiar lines: "God's in His heaven, all's right with the world." But Browning was no superficial optimist. He dared to look on the meanest and darkest forms of human action and passion, and from an almost universal survey of evil bring to his readers a conviction of hope.

Many students of Browning agree that when he tried to be philosophical and show the reasons why one could be hopeful, and why he believed "A sun will pierce the thickest cloud earth ever stretched," he was always at his worst. But when he wrote as a poet, and expressed his optimism with poetic insight, and with no attempt to explain it logically, he was at his best. Now I think the same is true of trying to give a reason for the hope that is in us. It cannot be done logically. When we look at the world around us it is pretty difficult to find any logical arguments to be a basis for our hope. In fact trying to build a logical explanation would in the end, I fear, leave most of us inclined to adopt the opinion of the sage who thought "that the best thing that could have happened to man was never to have been born, and the next best to have died the moment after he came into existence." No, since the source of hope is in the spirit of man, and since one cannot deal with the spirit of man logically, our reply to this question does not lie in the field of philosophy. The only answer is the poetic or the religious answer. It is in the thought found in those lines of Browning from his poem "A Death in the Desert":

The acknowledgment of God in Christ  
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee  
All questions in the earth and out of it,  
And has so far advanced thee to be wise.

Those words express beautifully the source of hope. The reason that you and I can be hopeful in the midst of the worst period of suffering and tragedy and cruelty this world has ever seen, is that deep within our hearts we believe in the God who was revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

We cannot prove that faith logically, but it is there. Somehow or other we know that even in the midst of this world upheaval, the mighty will and purpose of God is still at work. So we can cry with Job: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." Paul Elmer More in his last years wrote a book called "Pages from an Oxford Diary" in which there is this lovely sentence: "To know that we have a great Friend at our side who voluntarily shares with us the consequences of our faults, who will not abandon us though we err seventy times seven, who shows us that the evil we do is a breach of trust between person and person —to know that is to gain a new insight into life and death, and to be inspired with new hopes, it may mean rebirth from above." Does that not express the faith that most of us have these days: a faith that we do have an Unseen Friend by our side who shares with us the consequences of our sins, and who will never leave us? It is that faith which cannot be explained or argued about which is the source of hope.

In one of the churches of which I was minister there was some talk of doing away with the evening service. I have always remembered the remark of one woman who said to me: "I never go to the evening service myself, but it gives me a great deal of comfort to think that the lights are on in the church on Sunday evening." Behind that seemingly foolish statement is a good thought. We often say what a pity it is that the people who should be in church are never there. But too seldom do we stop to estimate the influence of that few in church on the entire community. In like manner who can estimate the effect of that light shining through the stained glass windows of that church on a Sunday evening? In other words, in the

long run Christianity produces its effects on the world, not through talk and resolutions and crowds, but through individuals one by one who have been converted to this higher and deeper way of life, and from whose souls radiates the light of their faith in God as revealed by Jesus Christ. Just as faith is the source of the hope in each of us, so Christianity which gives us this faith and preserves it for us is indeed the source of the hope of the world. We cannot deal logically with the spirit of man, in like manner we cannot deal logically with Christianity. In every age there have been people who have proved that Christianity would not survive. They have always had good reasons for their arguments. When Voltaire said: "Ere the beginning of the 19th Century Christianity will have disappeared," his arguments were very logical. But Christianity is not based on logic. It started with a young man hanging on a Cross who had a handful of followers who were scared out of their wits and ran away. Not a very logical start for a great movement. Throughout its long history this handful of followers has grown, but it is still only a handful, and they have been persecuted and misunderstood and ineffective in changing the world. Logically Christianity should have disappeared. But those who thought it would did not reckon with the spirit of its founder. There was something in that man's spirit which could not be killed. No soldiers, no Cross, no tomb, no grave could destroy His life, for it was deathless. So in our age as in every age all the darkness of the world cannot hide the light of Christ's spirit, for deep within His heart was a faith and trust in a fatherly God of Love which "hath begotten us unto a lively hope."

Paul was right. We are saved by hope—a hope which

finds its source in nothing outwardly seen or provable, but deep within the spirit of man in a faith that nothing can kill. Armed with this faith, you and I can stand in a sinister world confronted by the darkest elements of human experience, and hopefully proclaim the victory of our faith, which will indeed enable us to rise up and build. It takes a poet to sum this up, and here are the words I think do it best:

There shall always be the Church and the World,  
And the heart of man  
Shivering and fluttering between them choosing and chosen,  
Valiant, ignoble, dark, and full of light  
Swinging between hell gate and heaven gate  
And the gates of hell shall not prevail.

## CAN CONSCIENCE BE YOUR GUIDE?

WHAT would be your reaction to these words, which were written a few years ago by a well-known writer: "There is no need to bother with organized religion. Let conscience be your guide. That is all the religion you need"? Undoubtedly it is true that some people believe that conscience is a divine spark within human beings which can guide them correctly in all the actions of their daily lives. It is reported that in the copy-book which George Washington used as a schoolboy, this important rule was printed, one which he never forgot: "Labour to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire—conscience."

We hear a great deal about conscience these days, particularly with regard to conscientious objectors, and a great many people are under the impression that conscience is a spark of celestial fire, which if kept alive and followed, will enable them to lead the good life. Conscience can be your sole guide in this life, you need no other, these folk say. Follow carefully its dictates and you will never go far astray. Let conscience be your guide, for it is a divine spark miraculously residing in the human breast, and it is infallible.

This view of the conscience as the still, small voice of the Lord transmitting His commands to human beings

may be acceptable to some who believe just as strongly in other miraculous phenomena. But to the scientifically-trained minds of intelligent people such a belief is far more difficult. It is hard to think of conscience as something divine which is above and beyond the reach of scientific investigation. Most thoughtful people are interested in finding out just what conscience is, how it works, what it is due to, whether or not it is unexplainable. In this regard there are a few important considerations which tend to make one wonder whether conscience can after all be our guide. Is it not possible that it is thought of as being divine, simply because it is so mysterious?

One fact which we should consider is that the consciences of men seem to differ. The consciences of most people are dependent upon their environment. For example, at one time the exposure of infant girls was not viewed with horror in some parts of China, and the average Chinese had no pangs of conscience about it. But let a Chinese be remiss in honoring his parents and he suffered from all kinds of self-reproach, which would be lacking, I am afraid, in the average American.

Murder, brutality, and treachery of the worst kind seem to have little effect on a good Nazi's conscience, as actions of that sort would on a good American; but were the Nazi to make a derogatory remark about his country's leader, his conscience would trouble him greatly, which would be true of few Americans. The good Catholic suffers all sorts of remorse when he fails to attend church on Sunday, but we can hardly say the same is true of a good Protestant. A visitor to a penitentiary in Brazil inquired if there were many thieves among the inmates. The warden was

shocked and replied: "Oh, no, Brazilians are very honest. Nearly all these men are murderers." In other words, some Brazilians seem to look on theft as a more shocking crime than murder. Differences in social position, economic situation, and most of all environment and education, produce marked variations in the consciences of all human beings. If this is true it is difficult to maintain that conscience can be our guide, when consciences are so different.

Another important fact to consider is that men's consciences have led them to commit all manner of horrible and stupid and harmful acts. Wars are usually conscientiously fought. The Christian martyrs were conscientiously burned at the stake. Jesus was crucified by men who were following the dictates of their consciences. You can find in history innumerable crude and foolish acts which have been committed by people who were following their consciences. The story of poor Captain Kemble of Boston who, in the early days of this country, after coming back from a long sea voyage, was put in the public stocks for kissing his wife on Sunday on the front steps of his own home, is an excellent example of the kind of foolishness to which the consciences of men have led. And of course these stories can be duplicated in every age and in every country of the world. I saw a picture not long ago of an Indian fakir, with a long emaciated hand stretched at right angles from his shoulder. He had conscientiously held it that way for some thirty years. A woman died recently in this country whose body was covered with scars and burns and lacerations of all kinds. A note left showed that she had starved and tortured herself to death, even though she was worth thousands of dollars, because

of the dictates of her conscience. St. Simeon Stylites, the famous pillar-hermit, built himself a pillar sixty feet high and lived on the top of it for thirty years, preaching and converting. He was following the dictates of his conscience. Once again it seems hard to believe that conscience can be your guide, when so many of the foolish acts and atrocious crimes of the race have been conscientiously committed.

Another fact of which we must think is that conscience, far from guiding us to the good life of happiness and peace, more often than not brings us the most intense suffering, and all kinds of mental disorders with their resultant misery. One well-known doctor writes this: "Every physician who has had much to do with nervous troubles and emotional disorders soon comes to realize that thousands of well-meaning individuals are suffering . . . as a result of over-working the conscience." That is perfectly true. Some people who might otherwise be happy have let their consciences so inhibit and repress their natural desires that they are forced to live in a cage of unhappiness built by their own consciences. Other people so overwork their consciences that they become almost insane by attempting to make the most minute and unimportant details and actions of their lives conscientious. If we let our consciences become so hypersensitive that we are in a continual state of worry over what we have done or what we haven't done, we will soon find ourselves in the psychopathic ward of some hospital. Does it not seem at times that conscience, far from being a divine guide, is more a demonic prison keeper? The words which Shakespeare had one of his characters use are excellent:

My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,  
And every tongue brings in a several tale,  
And every tale condemns me for a villain.

Yes, conscience fills us all with feelings of remorse and shame and guilt, but if we overwork it, it not only condemns us as villains but gives us a life sentence to prison.

In the light of these facts, can we let conscience be our guide? Is it really such a divine spark within us, as some would have us believe? Does it lay down dictates which are infallible?

One answer to those questions is that conscience by itself cannot be our guide in this life. After all, in the sense in which I am interpreting it, conscience is simply the correspondence of our inner feelings with some common outside standard, which for the most part is determined by environment and education. This means that conscience by itself can only guide us as high as those outside standards. As they develop, so conscience will develop, and will not allow us to be satisfied with anything lower than those mores built up to such a great extent by the manner and surroundings of our lives. In that sense conscience is a divine force working within us all. It has a tendency to keep our actions and motives as high as the prevailing standards of our generation. But it is by no means an infallible guide even for that. If we overwork it, it leads us to all kinds of difficulties. If we underwork it, the same thing is true. Therefore, at best, all we can say is that conscience should help us to do our duty. But it does not take the place of religion, for vital religion begins where conscience leaves off.

There are many people today, especially young people, who think that they are religious if they are doing their

duty and following the dictates of their own consciences. They think that going to church to worship God, that prayer and faith and all other signs of organized religion, are not necessary if they are leading good lives by obedience to laws, by doing their duty, and following their consciences. In other words, these are the people who boil religion down to ethics. Do good, obey the law, and let your conscience be your guide, and you'll be happy. I have had some people come to me and say something like this: "Is organized religion after all so important? Does it matter much whether a person goes to church, and prays, and has a faith in God and Jesus Christ?" And when I reply that I wouldn't be an ordained minister if I didn't think so, the answer is invariably: "But look at So-and-So (mentioning a person in the community). He never goes to church, he doesn't pray or have any vital faith in God, and yet he is leading as good a life as any man in this community. He is honest in his business dealings, he is good to his wife and children, he obeys the laws, and follows his conscience. Can a religious man do any more than that?" The answer to that comment touches as profound a problem as any Christian can face, namely, the relationship between morality and religion, between a life of moral endeavor based on the conscience, and the true religious life based on faith.

I should like to attempt to give you an answer to that difficult question, by relating a very simple story. It is a story about a father who had a strong and brilliant son, who was all a father could desire in his boy. The boy was so unusually bright and clever that there wasn't anything which he couldn't seem to do well. But besides, he was a good boy and seldom in any trouble. When the boy was

about ten, the father began to notice that his son was getting very independent and self-important and self-assured. Seeing danger ahead, he decided to teach him a lesson. One summer day, the father, who was an expert swimmer, took his son to a lake which was about half a mile long. He asked the boy, who had never swum over one hundred yards in his whole life, if he thought he could swim across that lake. The boy, full of confidence, assured him that he could. So they started swimming, and the boy went on ahead with an air of importance and achievement. However, it wasn't long before he began to slow up, and then he turned and tried backstroke for a while. Gradually he became so tired that he could hardly raise his arms out of the water, but he bravely struggled on, though his confidence was getting weaker. At last he was too worn out to swim another stroke and he called to his father to help him, and his father swam up and put his arm around him, and brought him safely to shore. The father had given the boy an impossible task to do, in order that his son might learn the meaning of having his strength reenforced by a greater strength. Needless to say, the boy had revealed to him that day one of the most essential truths in life. In parable form, it is a good answer to our problem. The person who is leading a good life by being obedient to the moral law, and yet has no interest in God and religion, can oftentimes get along well in life as long as the swimming is easy. But there is bound to come a time, such as war time, when he is faced with problems which cannot be answered by his conscience, which require some outside help far greater than anything he or any other human can give. When such a time comes that person is lost, and his good life is meaningless. In

other words, anyone who attempts to turn religion into ethics, to simply follow the moral law of conscience, that person in the end will become hard, self-conscious, confused, and unhappy. To lead a good life in this world is absolutely impossible, if we try to do it alone. In the very structure of our moral life, there is a demand and a summons which we cannot meet without God's help. That is the true relationship between morality and religion. If a man is to follow the moral law laid down by his conscience, he must have more than himself if he is to succeed, he needs God. Conscience alone cannot be our guide in this life. Amiel in his Journal put this idea very beautifully: "This little flame must be the star of our life, it alone can guide our shivering ark through the tumult of the great waters, give us escape from the temptations of the sea, from the monsters and tempests thrown forth by the night and the flood. Faith in God, in a holy, merciful, loving, fatherly God, is the divine ray that kindles that flame." As long as we depend upon ourselves to carry out the dictates of our consciences, we fail, no matter how high our principles and how noble our ideals. We need a power not our own which can transform uninteresting and plain duty into love, and that power comes from God through Jesus Christ.

Let me close with this illustration. Do you remember how St. Paul as a young man determined to keep perfectly the moral law of God? But a very strange thing happened to him. The harder he tried, the more closely he followed his own conscience, the more unhappy he became. He followed the law literally and tried to convert those who didn't. He helped to stone to death those heretics who called themselves Christians, and who were disobeying the

law, and yet he saw on their faces a peace which was denied him. Why, in all their suffering and pain, were they so happy when he was so miserable? He watched Stephen die, and Stephen's face was full of light. Filled with wrath and anger, he set out for Damascus to punish more members of this frightful sect. Then at midday on his journey he saw a great light brighter than the sun. In a moment he was changed from a selfish, hard-hearted, and confused man, to a tender, loving follower of Jesus Christ. From that time on instead of simply attempting to follow the dictates of conscience and to do his duty, he had come upon the joy of a great trust. It was not long until he was able to say in all truth: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Although he suffered much he never lost his glorious faith, which turned the task of following his conscience and obeying the moral law, from an odious hardship which it had been, to a lasting joy.

Conscience can never be our guide unless we are also tapping the power necessary to give us strength to kindle that divine spark. The whole difference between morality and religion is found in this inward power which comes to a person who has a strong faith in God. Morality is based on regard for rules and laws, and the need of doing our duty. Religion is based on a regard for persons, and the need for being affectionate and loving. Christ gave His disciples no code of laws to be followed, but simply a way of life, a spirit of living, which would lead to happiness. When we can bring divine power into our lives, then we have not only the secret of mastering our consciences, but also the glad assurance, the burning enthusiasm, and the true freedom of a loving trust in the living God.

## VOLUNTARY SACRIFICE

THERE was a delightful cartoon which appeared in a weekly magazine some time ago. It was a picture of two children teaching their father how to ride a bicycle—and the father was having a very difficult time of it. It was a good cartoon because there are many people like that father today who are finding that this war is forcing them to learn or relearn to do a number of things which they would not have dreamed of doing even a year ago—things like riding a bicycle, or perhaps even walking. The summer of my freshman year in college my greatest ambition was to own a cheap automobile. After securing a job with a farmer who lived five miles away, I was sure my family would allow me to purchase one. But instead I received their congratulations on the job and on having a bicycle to ride to work. That summer I took a sacred oath that when I had money enough to buy a car I would never ride a bike again. Nevertheless, though it is somewhat of a humiliating experience, this war has forced me to cancel that early vow and some days I almost gladly ride my bicycle to my office.

Have you noticed that one result of this present war is that it has introduced many people to a conception of self-sacrifice which in ordinary times would be very alien to them? It is a part of our nature, I suspect, to protest

against those things which require real sacrifice on our part, because those are the things which seem to limit our freedom and our pleasure. Most of my generation, up until this war, rebelled against the idea of self-denial, thinking that it was a rather sentimental conception which sounded nice in church on Sunday but which one forgot entirely on Monday. After all, if a person is to sacrifice his own interests and desires to those of others, it implies that that person is a dependent and limited being, not possessing genuine mastery of his fate, or having things firmly under control. Many of us until quite recently didn't want to admit that. We were friendly and generous most of the time. We would give anything extra we possessed to worthy causes. But when giving meant that we must deny ourselves something we wanted, we changed the subject. We were sure that anything which repressed our natural instinct was bad for us, and therefore self-denial was a repressing phenomenon which might seriously mar our delicately constructed natures. In other words, we measured success and happiness in terms of our own satisfaction and gratification, and not in terms of service rendered to others or to God.

But this war has changed that. As Antrobus says in Thornton Wilder's play: "When you're at war you think about a better life; when you're at peace you think about a more comfortable one." We begin to see that we cannot win this war unless we are willing to make sacrifices. Mr. Churchill's conception of "Blood, Sweat, and Tears" would have seemed nonsense to us a few years ago, and we would have asked what point there would be in living if we had to worship a trinity such as that. But today most of us accept it and even find meaning in it. Those of us

who thought that self-sacrifice was a sign of weakness, a crime against the dignity and rights of man, or an old-fashioned and repressive view of life, have changed our attitude today and recognize that the conception of sacrifice is a powerful one which we must accept if we are going to win this war. And so, all over America, people are sacrificing their interests and ambitions to win this war, and hence riding bicycles, and walking, and even staying home without too much complaining.

L. P. Jacks, in his autobiography, says this: "On the whole I think we should be well advised to get rid of all this botheration about happiness both in our philosophical exercises and in our daily life." That is exactly what this war has done for us. Many of us up until the time we entered this conflict were living and thinking in terms of our own happiness. Now we are forced to think and live in terms of service to something outside of ourselves. The shameful thing is that it takes something as horrible as war to bring us to this point of view. It is the teaching of history that sacrifice is the basis of all great and lasting achievements. The old legend to the effect that an innocent life must be walled up in the foundation of a building if that building is to stand is a true one, for there can be no permanent building of any sort which has not meant the sacrifice of life. The most durable institution in the Western World so far has been the Christian Church, and the reason it has survived is simply that, walled up within its foundations, are the lives of hundreds upon hundreds of innocent people who were willing to be persecuted and tormented and even slain for the cause they believed in. But this is also one of the most important lessons that Christianity has been trying to teach throughout the ages.

Christianity attempts to reconcile us to sacrifice, not simply by placing it at the center of life, but by pointing to it as a means whereby life is fulfilled.

Christianity originated in sacrifice. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." At its center stands the Cross, the symbol of sacrifice. All its most important teachings spring from this conception. Christ said that He came to give life more abundantly to human beings. But how was that to be accomplished? "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself . . ." "He that findeth his life must lose it. . . ." That is the kind of answer Christ gave. The life of self-denial and self-sacrifice is the abundant life. That is the most important lesson Christianity has been trying to teach, and without much success. This war, however, has forced us to accept this way of life, the way of sacrifice. Some people, therefore, say very glibly that this war has made men more religious.

Wouldn't it be nice if it were as simple as that? This war has forced a good many of us to deny ourselves, but because of that it does not follow that we have been led to Christ or are any more Christian than we were before. Let me confess frankly that when I ride my bicycle to work the thought uppermost in my mind is "Won't it be grand when I don't have to do this any more?" In other words, the sacrifices of most of us these days are based purely on expediency. But Christ's way of life was not based on that. We are willing to sacrifice today because we know if we don't we may lose this war. And there are even a few who recognize that if we want to win the peace which follows this war, probably the way of sacrifice is the only way. But I suspect the majority of us are looking forward to the time when we no longer have to deny ourselves but can

begin once again to live and think in terms of our own happiness.

There is a story told of how, after the Civil War, a mother with her baby met General Lee, and she put her little child in his arms and asked him to offer a prayer for her first-born. He bowed his head over the child and held him close, and then handed him back to his mother saying, "Teach him to deny himself." That is the great lesson that all of us need to learn. This war is *forcing* us to deny ourselves, but it is not *teaching* us to deny ourselves. Self-denial can be acquired in two ways, either it is forced from without, which is what happens in all dictatorships, and in countries at war, or it springs from within—within a person who has caught a vision of something greater and more worthwhile than himself. This second method of sacrifice is the basis of Christianity—the voluntary giving of oneself and substance to others.

Why is it that it has been so difficult for human beings to understand and follow this conception of self-denial which is at the heart of Christianity, and on which our own happiness and the peace of the world depends? One obvious reason is the fact that self-denial is based on discipline, and discipline has not been a characteristic of our generation. We have hated anything which restrained or repressed us, and have wanted to lead free lives, where we could follow our whims and desires and passions as we saw fit. And hence having been unwilling to deny ourselves, we have arrived at the place where we are forced to deny ourselves. That happens in every undisciplined life. The man who is unwilling to discipline his desire for food always arrives at the place where such discipline is forced upon him. The person who is unwilling to control his

passions eventually comes to the place where his passions are controlled for him. In other words, it is only by voluntary discipline that we keep our freedom. One writer says: "The Brotherhood of Man is not a crowd of friendly humanitarians. The Beloved Community is not a picnic. The Kingdom of God is not a mere collection of good people who believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is an exceeding great army of skillful, disciplined, highly competent men and women." Those few sentences state excellently the reasons for the failures of Christianity. To be a good Christian requires the same kind of discipline which is necessary to make a good soldier, except that it is voluntary. When Mark Twain lost his fortune and faced tremendous debts, he could have made use of the bankruptcy law and escaped all responsibility. Instead he worked day and night tirelessly until he had paid every cent. His comment was: "Honor is a harder master than law." If you understand the meaning of those words you understand why it is so hard to be a Christian. The Christian life is no picnic. It is disciplining ourselves to live up to ideals which are far harder masters than the most ruthless tyrants. And yet if we Americans are not willing to discipline ourselves voluntarily, before we know it we shall no longer have any choice in the matter at all for we will find ourselves under the heel of a dictator.

In the second place, Christ's conception of voluntary self-denial is hard to grasp because it means taking ourselves out of the central position in life around which everything else revolves and putting the common interest of all mankind ahead of our own. Max Lerner, in writing about the Russian military resistance, suggests that one factor in their remarkable stand is "the collective tenacity

of the Russian people" which springs from their sense of collective participation in new social construction, a training in community action, and a sense of having a stake in what they are defending. That collective tenacity of the Russian people which has been such a powerful force in this war is of course nothing more than the result of the willingness of the Russians to deny themselves for the sake of their country. The peace which follows this war will depend upon whether the United Nations acquire a collective tenacity based on a willingness to sacrifice their own interests for the sake of world interests. That is what all the talk about global thinking and the century of the common man means. But the interesting thing to me is that all these conceptions come right back to Christ's words when He said: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself." Unless we can take our own interests out of the central place in our thinking and living and substitute the interests of mankind, this war will have been fought in vain. As Lewis Mumford writes: "The problem is how we can begin to think and act not merely as Americans, not merely as Europeans, but as members of the human race." The answer is, if any man would become a member of the human race, let him deny himself.

Most of us know that if we want to break a bad habit we have acquired, will power is never enough. The best way is to develop a good habit to replace the old one, and the difficulty is finding a good habit strong enough to replace the bad one. Now I think exactly the same thing is true of self-denial of this kind. Most of us have been brought to place our own interests first. And all the will-power in the world won't change us. The only thing that will do it is a conception so overwhelming that it is strong

enough to change our way of thinking and living. Such an idea is being born in our world today: the conception of a durable order of peace in the world, in which all of the many cultures, many traditions, many nations, many men will be brought into harmony and adjustment with each other. If you and I can make such a thought as that central in our lives, the stimulating and empowering and controlling center around which our lives grow—we shall not only find our real selves, but we will found the kind of a world God intends.

And, finally, Christ's principle of voluntary self-denial is difficult because it rests on the assumption that man, taken individually and collectively, does not control life—that is to say that man is not a self-contained, self-sufficient, and independent being, but rather a recipient of life, a vessel which is filled from some outside source. It is only when we recognize our dependence, the fact that we are not originators or creators, but simply discoverers or users of what has been given us, that the way of self-sacrifice becomes easy. The values, the meaning, and the purpose of life are not ordained by us, but by God, and we find them only when we come into relationship with God. That is why it is only through worship that we can learn the way of self-denial. Worshipping God and feeling our dependence on Him and our close relationship with Him, we begin to recognize the profound truth that we find our real selves when we lose them in Him and in the work He would have us do. David Livingston, who gave his life for his missionary labors in Africa, once wrote: "People talk of the sacrifices I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa—it is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege." So all the really great men and women of

the race who have felt their dependence on God's love and power have testified that the life of self-denial is no hardship but a privilege.

For some years now, many of us have been living pretty shallow lives, concerned mostly with our own pleasures and gratification and thinking and caring little about God. The tragedy and crisis of our times makes a change necessary. We must become a disciplined, unselfish, worshiping people willing to live voluntarily the life of self-denial. The future of our own happiness and the peace of the world depends upon it. "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself."

## GOOD NEWS \*

THERE is a great deal to be said for the statement that all institutions ought to be dissolved at the death of their founders. One reason is the fact that most institutions have become different from what their founders intended. For example, I have wondered what the founder of The Northfield Schools would have thought had he been present recently at a dancing lesson held in the gym at Hermon. Mr. Moody was very much opposed to dancing, and when asked once by a girl if it might not be permissible among family friends, he is said to have replied: "My dear girl, I would a thousand times rather have you get more grace in your heart and less in your heels." He was also very much opposed to the theatre, card-playing, billiards, and smoking. It is true that as years pass the ideas held by the founders of institutions are no longer adhered to by their successors, and hence it becomes very difficult to know how to look upon the founder, and more important what attitude should be instilled in students toward him. A few years ago after a Founder's Day service I heard a student of these Schools say: "If I hear anything more about the founder of The Northfield Schools, I am going to scream." That led me to wonder whether our approach to our founder has been correct.

\* A Founder's Day Sermon.

This is indeed a far more difficult and profound question than it may appear. Mark Van Doren states the problem this way: "The educated person knows one thing at least: the past is a burden which crushes only those who ignore it, and so do not study how to balance it on their shoulders. It is there in spite of everything; known and used for what it is, it can lighten the entire load. Dismissed from the mind by practical men, it can bring them to deserve Robert Maynard Hutchins' definition of them as 'those who practise the errors of their forefathers'." All of us would agree that one cannot dismiss the past. Our only hope of progress in the present is to understand the past. I maintain, however, that there is something wrong if the mention of the past makes a student want to scream. Our question today is: how can we handle the past so that it will lighten our load? Or more specifically: what attitude should we take toward our founder, so that a knowledge of his life will be helpful to us in living our lives?

Most of us would agree that it is foolishness to try to sneer or scoff at the past, as though one could learn nothing from it. James Thurber has an excellent cartoon which pictures a father talking to his little girl and saying, "Why don't you wait and see what becomes of your own generation, before you jump on mine." That father is right. There is no point in jumping on the past until we are sure that we are not making just as foolish errors ourselves. In all I have read and heard about D. L. Moody I have never come across anyone, who understood him at all, who could scoff at him. Even those who did not agree with him had to admit that he was a great man. Until his death he was the outstanding evangelist of the English-speaking world, and talked to more human beings than

any other man. At the height of his fame as an evangelist he founded The Northfield Schools, which have become the largest private preparatory institution in the country. And he also organized conferences of Christian workers and college youth which became famous. He was a great leader to whom thousands of people looked for inspiration. In recognizing the greatness of our founder and in appreciating his labors we are meeting the challenge of the past with gratitude toward it, which is one of the best ways of handling it.

A Northfield graduate, Bertha Damon, in her popular book "A Sense of Humus" put it this way: "To have a sense of humus is to have an appreciation of the past, to realize that to discard the achievements and virtues slowly built up through the long periods of human society and to attempt to live solely in the present is like throwing away humus and trying to exist in more or less inorganic hardpan."

But while we must appreciate the past, we must be careful that we do not go to extremes. There are some people who esteem the past so much that they live in it, instead of the present. I have met people who have such a high regard for D. L. Moody that they honestly believe that everything that has happened in Northfield since his time is not worth noticing. These people are like the man in Saroyan's story of the one-string cello. This man went into a junkshop and picked up a cello which had only one string. He took it home and sat down in the corner of the front room of his house, found one place to put his finger and hold down that string, and then began to saw back and forth with the bow. Hours and hours every day his patient wife had to listen to him sawing back and

forth on that one string with his finger always on the same place. After some weeks of this she could stand it no longer. Since he had taught her always to speak very quietly to him, she tiptoed up to him one day as he was sawing away with his finger on that one spot, and softly she pointed out to him that most cellos had four strings and that furthermore all the good players she had ever seen always kept changing their fingers from one place to another all the time they were playing. He laid down the bow, and looked at her and said: "I might have expected this from you. You are a woman. Your hair is long, your understanding short. Of course other cello players are always moving their fingers from one place to another. They are simply looking for the right place. I have found it." Since change is the law of all life, it is dangerous to become so rapt up in the past that we fail to see the advanced moves of the present. Dr. Fosdick once wrote a sermon entitled "The Peril of Worshipping Jesus" in which he pointed out that the world has tried to get rid of Jesus in two ways, first by crucifying Him, and when that failed, by worshipping Him. He wrote: "To dress Him up in elaborate, metaphysical creeds, hide His too-piercing eyes in the smoke of sacramental adoration, build beautiful sanctuaries where His challenging social ideals may fade out in vague mysticism, get Him off somewhere on a high altar, pray to Him, sing to Him, do anything for Him rather than let Him get back where He started, walking the common ways of men and talking about how to live—that always has been the most successful way of getting rid of Jesus." It is far easier to worship a great personality of the past than it is to try to understand him and the spirit of his life intelligently. Those who over-

glorify the past in a sentimental way lose the benefits it can bring them. From all that I have heard and read about the founder of these Schools, it is plain that he never desired glory for himself, and that he never wanted people to worship him. I am sure he would heartily disapprove of a Founder's Day service if it were planned simply as a means of glorifying his name. He was tremendously interested in helping people to understand Christ and His way of life, and he had no time to think about his own glory. In handling the past we must take care not to become sentimental about it, or to worship it so blindly that we miss the lessons it can teach.

Moreover, to appreciate the past one must be careful not to overemphasize details, but rather to catch the general principles and truths which it illustrates. In considering the life of D. L. Moody many people concentrate on minor details—such as his ideas about dancing and smoking. But we are living in a different age and have a different attitude toward such matters. You have seen pictures of D. L. Moody driving around Northfield in a horse and buggy. Because he did that, however, is no reason for me to do the same. Means of transportation have changed, and we have better methods of travel than in his day. In the same way some people concentrate on the details of D. L. Moody's religion and his approach to the great Christian truths. They try to prove that were he alive today he would be doing things exactly the way he did in his own day. I, for one, refuse to believe this. While the fundamental truths of religion never change, it is true that they must be set in a new framework to meet the demands of a new age. The pity is that Moody, with his deep understanding of human nature, is not alive today

to help us find what the new framework should be. At least we can be sure that he would have changed the details of his approach to religion to fit a new age.

In order to appreciate the past, one must try to understand the principles and the spirit which motivated the achievements of outstanding people. I am not going to list all the fundamental ideas on which the founder's life was based, because most of us have heard them discussed many times. His common sense, his openmindedness, his love of work, and his deep faith were the qualities which, combined with his personality, accounted for his greatness. I am concerned today with just one thing about D. L. Moody's life, which I have never heard discussed very much and yet which seems to me tremendously important in understanding him. It is a quality of spirit which, if we could comprehend and acquire, would indeed lighten the loads we carry in these troubled times. H. M. Tomlinson, in a recent article, describes an experience he had some time ago in a village in England which had just been bombed by the Germans. Some of the inhabitants were standing around looking at the destruction, when the silence was broken by a young woman who said this: "You know, as far back as I can remember, all the news of the world I've ever heard has been bad." As Tomlinson said: "This young commentator had pointed at a matter rather more serious than the war in our street. Humanity, she complained, had never provided her with good news. Could a young, healthy, and pretty woman say anything worse of the world?" I am convinced that the comment of that young woman in England is typical of the comment of men and women in every age who have longed for good news, but who have found themselves living in a world

filled with bad news. Each one of us has this longing for good news deep within us. It is what keeps us living, the hope that tomorrow will bring us good news. Now in history whenever a man has appeared with a message of good news, he has never lacked followers. This was particularly true of D. L. Moody. He had a message of good news to bring to people whose lives were filled with bad news. He brought them the good news of the Gospel of Christ. He put it this way in one of his sermons: "The Gospel of Christ is good tidings of great joy. No better news ever came out of heaven than the gospel. No better news ever fell upon the ears of the family of man than the gospel. . . . I want to tell you why I like the gospel. It is because it has been the very best news I have ever heard. That is just why I like to preach it, because it has done me so much good." When he spoke simple words like that he was so sincere that the people who listened knew they were true, that the Gospel of Christ was good news which could dispel their sorrows and worries and troubles. To me this is the secret of the greatness of D. L. Moody. He had found good news in which he believed so deeply that it helped to overcome the bad news in the world about him.

Now you and I may not agree with the methods which he used in presenting his message, and we may not agree with some of the details of it, but we must agree with the fundamental truth which he had grasped. We are living in a world filled with bad news where even the glorious victories of our armies are darkened by the somber news that thousands of our boys have been killed. We need good news if life is to have any meaning for us at all. There is still only one place to turn to find it and that is

the Gospel of Christ. It contains a message of good news which will overcome all the bad news of the world. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Those words are true.

Dr. Paul Moody, the son of our founder, in his book entitled "My Father" wrote: "Of all the things I have heard since my father died I believe he would have rejoiced most in a sentence attributed to Dean Inge. 'The Gospel is not good advice. It is good news.' " I suggest to you that those words contain the great lesson which we can learn from D. L. Moody. Christianity for him was never simply good advice, it was good news which could change lives and even overcome the world. When we say that the spirit of our founder is alive in these Schools, all we mean is that we believe as he did that the Gospel of Christ is the best news the world has ever had. If you and I can gain here the same kind of faith our founder had—a faith in Christ and the good news He came into this world to bring, then not only have we been true to his spirit, but we have also an inner strength and power which will dispel all the bad news of our world.

## THE PROBLEM OF INDIFFERENCE

ONE thing which every war does is to increase adult preoccupation with youth. In some ways this is a good thing. Gifts to schools and colleges are usually larger in war times, showing the increased interest of adults in young people. But in other ways this interest is a bad thing. Adults who in peace time vaguely wonder if the younger generation is going to the dogs, in war time become certain that it is. This Second World War's biggest symposium on this subject broke out some time ago in New York when, led by the *New York Times*, most of the country's newspapers and weekly magazines devoted columns to what one magazine called "flaming youth." Here are some abstracts from one article on the occasion of this excited interest in the younger generation. "They came up out of Times Square subways like pilgrims bound for Mecca. Most of them were children. Some were draped to the bricks in green pork-pie hats, sharp canary-yellow coats, shrunken ankle pants, and knee-length watch chains which tinkled in the 4 a.m. gloom. Zoot-suited or not, they lined up at Manhattan's Paramount Theatre box office and waited. They were jitterbugs, and they were there to dig Harry James, leader of the nation's swing band sensation. By ten o'clock 4000 of them had squeezed into the movie house, while 4000 more lined up outside. Inside

the theatre the curtain rose. There was Harry James. Jitterbugs called his name, gripped their hands, seethed in their seats. He began to blow. They swayed, moaned, pulsed, throbbed. The scorching *Two O'clock Jump* projected eight bugs into the aisles, where they proceeded to lay some iron. Down in front an occasional voice prayed: 'Come on Harry.' He and his profane brassy choirs really rocked them. This spectacle went on all week at the Paramount." Some of the best staff writers were sent to investigate, and for the most part they were bewildered by it. One critical reporter thought it was a shame that Harry James had not turned into a modern Pied Piper and, playing his horn, led the whole crowd into the East River. But many adults, not so sophisticated, were very much upset, especially one eminent divine who said: "The horrible spectacle at the Paramount is another sign that the younger generation is totally depraved."

Would you agree with that statement? As a matter of fact I happened to be in New York myself at the time. I often plan my trips to coincide with important events of this sort. Since I couldn't possibly get inside the theatre, I stood across from it for a time watching the peculiar antics of those young people, and the heroic efforts of the police to keep order. Standing there I asked myself whether they were indeed totally depraved.

One thought that occurred to me was this: "Can one say that the behavior of these young people is so much worse than the kind of thing that went on in the college theatre I attended when I was a student?" That question confused me a little, so I passed on to another without any attempt at an answer.

My next thought was this: "I wonder what the parents

of these children are like?" Looking at some of those young people I became convinced that I knew quite a bit about their parents for I had probably heard some of them speak on John J. Anthony's Good Will Hour. It occurred to me that if it were their parents who publicly consulted him then these young people were certainly no more depraved than their elders. Unquestionably there is something wrong with parents who allow their children to be in Times Square at four o'clock in the morning, waiting six hours in line to hear a jazz orchestra.

My next thought, and the one which I would like to discuss briefly with you, was a little more cheerful. I decided that the whole thing was probably in great part brought about by the ingenious publicity of the theatre's press agents, and that the young people had been taken in by that, and to use a phrase from one paper "this frenzied jazzique hoofology" was probably innocuous. As I thought about the matter further I came to the conclusion that what worried me was not their total depravity, but simply the fact that most of them were probably indifferent to any of the higher and finer things in this life. It made me think of that story of the old preacher who, on a stormy Sunday evening, had for his congregation two very antiquated and elderly spinsters and that was all. Since they had braved the stormy weather he decided to carry on the service as though the church was full. And so he announced the text from Timothy on which he had prepared to preach: "Flee youthful lusts." The two members of the congregation looked inquiringly at one another, and one shouted into the ear trumpet of the other. "He's barking up the wrong tree tonight, isn't

he?" Anyone who says that these young people are totally depraved is barking up the wrong tree. These young people are not by and large leading sinful lives, for there is no great sin connected with listening to Harry James. No, the trouble is that these young people are not leading very good lives, that they are not exposing themselves to or becoming acquainted with any of the better things in this life. It is their indifference to great music, or great literature which could give them real enjoyment—a kind of pleasure Harry James never could bring them—which is the real problem that the spectacle at the Paramount presented.

Perhaps you have observed in the New Testament what great stress Christ placed on this problem of indifference? He seemed to understand that the majority of human beings were not tempted to fall into positive wickedness half as much as they were tempted to ignore everything that was fine, and noble, and of lasting value in life. In the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus did not condemn the priest and the Levite for their positive wickedness. They did not sin in that sense, for they walked along minding their own business. What Jesus condemned was their indifference. When He told the story of Dives, who feasted sumptuously while Lazarus laid uncared for at his gate, Jesus was not disapproving of Dives for any direct moral wrong he committed. The indictment is concerned only with Dives' indifference. No positive wrongs or vices are reported of those who stand condemned in the great parable of the Last Judgment. They were not morally depraved, they were simply indifferent. "I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in;

naked and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." Right through Christ's teachings one finds this tremendous concern with indifference, and that is probably what would worry Christ most about the younger generation today.

One of the main causes of indifference is the love of comfort. Dr. Wieman of Chicago says that a college roommate of his desired to improve his intellectual life. "He procured a large, comfortable chair, that was thought to be good for study. He got study slippers and a lounging jacket. A book rest was fastened to the arm of the chair to hold the book at the right angle before his eyes. A special lamp was installed and eyeshade, pencils, paper, and a revolving bookcase. He would come into the room after the evening meal, take off his coat and put on his jacket, take off his shoes and slip into the slippers, adjust the study lamp, put his book on the book rest, recline in the comfortable chair with his eyeshade over his eyes, and when everything was perfectly adjusted, he would go to sleep." Unfortunately this is the kind of thing which is apt to happen to us in this life. It is easier to read the stories in a weekly magazine than to tackle the classics. It is easier for most young people to listen to Harry James than the Philharmonic. It is easier for most people to have the kind of religion which allows them to sit comfortably in church each Sunday thinking of nothing, but which does not let them become concerned with such a command as: "Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me." Gibran has an excellent sentence in his book "*The Prophet*": "Verily the lust for comfort murders the passion of the soul, and then walks grinning at the funeral."

That is indeed what love of comfort does—it kills the soul.

A second cause of indifference is what might be called emotional fatalism. This mood is prevalent among many young people who scarcely recognize it themselves. Their creed is simply that whatever is, is inevitable, and there is nothing they can do about it. This always supplies them with perfect alibis for their indifference. A man said to his friend, "You're acting like a fool." "Well," was the answer, "if that is what I am I cannot help it. That is the way fate made me." A young person said: "I don't like classical music but why should I, my father and my grandfather never did." Such a position is of course pure nonsense and yet it is an easy attitude to assume if we are not careful, for fate is a very convenient excuse for our indifferences. But of course the indifference of many people to the really worthwhile things in life is due to the fact that they have never been exposed to them, and the tragedy is that sometimes it is not their own fault; they have never had the opportunity. I suspect this was true of many of the young people outside that theatre. And you can think of other causes of indifference ranging all the way from ignorance to downright laziness. But what is the cure?

There has recently been published one of the greatest religious books which has come out in our day. It is called "The Screwtape Letters" and consists of a series of letters written by Screwtape, an important official devil residing in Hell, to Wormwood, his nephew who is a junior devil on earth. The letters are instructions to Wormwood on how to corrupt the faith of a young man under his care, who is in danger of becoming a Christian. In one of the

letters Screwtape criticizes the work of his nephew in these words: "You allowed the patient to read a book he really enjoyed . . . you allowed him to walk to the old mill and have tea there—a walk through country he really likes. In other words, you allowed him two real pleasures. How can you have failed to see that a real pleasure was the last thing you ought to have let him meet? Didn't you foresee that it would just kill by contrast all the trumpery which you have been so laboriously teaching him to value?" Those are profound words and suggest a cure for indifference. Anyone who finds real positive pleasures cannot be indifferent.

One of the tragedies of war time is that it narrows the ways in which we can find positive pleasures. For many there will be little chance to read the classics, or listen to the Philharmonic, or to take a walk in the countryside for the next few years. In peace time one of the main purposes of education is to train our minds so that we can appreciate the really fine things in life as we are exposed to them. But war makes that kind of education almost impossible. In war time therefore more than in any other time we must depend on a source of positive enjoyment which has little to do with our education or our outward circumstances. That source is religion. In that great Christian document the Shorter Catechism, we are told that the chief end of man is "To glorify God and enjoy Him forever." Joy in the gospels never means simply happiness. It has a far deeper meaning than that, for it implies the presence of a reality which claims the self entirely and gives the self total satisfaction regardless of outward circumstances. That is what religious experience at its deepest means. It is the enjoyment of

God. If we find that, then we cannot be indifferent for we have a source of positive pleasure and power which makes life meaningful even in war time. That is what Christ meant when He said: "These things have I spoken to you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

## ONE WORLD AT A TIME \*

SOME years ago I was walking one Sunday afternoon in Hyde Park in London, which was crowded with groups of people gathered about various soap-box orators vigorously haranguing their listeners. I stood on the edge of one group and listened. Apparently the orator was under the impression we were all deaf, or a mile or so distant from him, but at least we did not miss any of his words. Before I had listened very long it became evident that the speaker was a communist, who was making a fiery attack upon religion in general and the church in particular because, as he said, it was forever talking about heaven in order to blind people to the injustices and wrongs of the capitalistic civilization. And he stressed the point that religion was simply an opiate of the people, lulling them into a stupor by its dreams and promises of the paradise to come. Finally a clergyman, whose identity could not be mistaken because of his clerical garb, approached the crowd, and the speaker immediately pointed his finger at him and said, sneeringly: "You churchmen! Always talking and thinking about heaven and paradise! Why don't you take one world at a time?" Whereupon the communist members of the group cheered lustily.

I have thought of those words often: "Why don't you

\* An Easter Sermon.

take one world at a time?" Christians have spent a great deal of time thinking about heaven, and preparing for it. The thought behind that old hymn that human beings are just wanderers on earth, and that heaven is our real home, has been emphasized throughout the ages of Christian thought. Perhaps it is true that Christians have given too much consideration to the world to come, and not enough to the great problems in the world here and now. And yet we all know that heaven is no longer stressed by Christians today as it was in our forefather's time. That alone is one of the reasons why parents find it so difficult to bring up their children today. A generation ago a parent could say to a child, "Now if you are not good, you won't go to heaven," and the child took the remark seriously. Samuel Butler in his great novel, "The Way of All Flesh," pictures his hero, who was probably himself, as having parents who never let him forget as a child that heaven was the reward for being good. In one place he writes: "When Ernest was ill, his mamma told him that he need not be afraid of dying, for he would go straight to heaven, if he would only be sorry for having done his lessons so badly, and vexed his dear papa, and if he would promise never, never, to vex him any more; and that when he got to heaven Grandpapa and Grandmamma would meet him, and he would be always with them, and they would be very good to him and teach him to sing ever such beautiful hymns. . . ." Then Butler, who was very fond of cats, adds characteristically: "But he was glad when he got better, for there were no kittens in heaven." It is true that there was a time when the conception of heaven was continually put before children as an enticement to goodness. And although there were probably

times when children wondered whether there were kittens and such things in heaven, for the most part heaven was a very serious consideration in their early lives, and the thought of it kept them from evil. But things are changed today, and parents can no longer use heaven so effectively as a weapon against their children's wickedness. Even though heaven is not the vital conception in our lives it was in the lives of our grandparents, still it remains the great Christian hope. There is no one of us here who does not hope that there is a heaven of some sort, where we may meet once again our loved ones who have passed on ahead of us, where we may even see Jesus face to face. There is no one of us who does not feel a thrill when we read those words of Jesus, spoken to the dying thief: "Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Our greatest hope centers around a Paradise which is to come, where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

But what the critics of the Christian religion never seem to understand is that this idea of a future life of some sort, which we commonly call heaven, is only a hope. It is not the central fact of our religion. The idea that Christians only try to lead good lives to get to heaven is false. The idea that Christianity blinds the eyes of its followers, and dulls their minds to all the brutal facts of the world by presenting them with a lovely picture of the Paradise which is awaiting them, is wrong. For the conception of heaven is not the central fact of our religion, about which all other conceptions revolve, as so many of its critics point out. The Christian idea of heaven is simply a hope.

Now it is true that we have a great many reasons for hoping that there is a future life. For one thing, it makes this life more cheerful and comforting. The hope in a future life makes death less tragic. You remember that poem by Edwin Arlington Robinson:

If after all that we have lived and thought,  
All comes to Nought—  
If there be nothing after Now,  
And we be nothing anyhow,  
And we know that;—why live?

Yes, without such a hope, life is less meaningful. But besides this, our affections, our consciences, our intuitions, all seem to point to something beyond death. They do not give us a final proof of heaven, but a real basis for our hope. Most of all, our hope for immortality is based on our faith in God as a loving Father. To anyone who believes in God the Father, it is but natural to think of going home one day to Him. And then, finally, our hope is based on Christ's testimony. While He never described heaven, He did say, "If it were not so I would have told you." He called this universe, "My Father's house," and pointed out that it had many mansions, and that this universe was only one of God's homes. He assumed that there was another home after death, and though He told us nothing of its geography or of the manner of life, He did say: "Be not afraid of them that kill the body and after that have no more that they can do." But, while we do have these good reasons for believing in a future life, they are not proofs, and heaven is not a fact. Immortality is, and will always be, our greatest hope.

Those who sneer at Christianity because of its other-

worldliness, have never really understood our religion, and most of all Jesus. There was nothing otherworldly about Jesus. He would have been in total agreement with anyone who suggested taking one world at a time. Jesus says almost nothing in our Gospels about heaven, but there is hardly a line in which He does not mention our earthly existence. Whenever and wherever Christians have overemphasized the conception of heaven, they have sadly misunderstood their Master. If you read the Gospels carefully, you will be impressed with two facts. First of all, except when a definite question was asked Him, Jesus never thought of physical death at all. When He dealt with the conception of death, it was always a spiritual matter. He referred to certain people as being dead, who were still actively engaged in the affairs of life. When a prospective follower said, "Let me go and bury my father," Jesus replied, "Let the dead bury their dead," which was His way of pointing out in figurative language the fact that He believed a moving body was not always evidence of life. In the parable of the Prodigal Son the father is made to say upon his boy's return, "Let us eat, and make merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again." Surely the boy had been physically alive in the far country, in fact there have always been people who consider riotous living of that sort as the fullest kind of life. But Jesus considered anyone engaged in that kind of living as already dead. In other words, so concerned was Jesus with one world at a time that He thought of death as something which took place here on earth in living bodies.

In the second place, notice that Jesus never thought of heaven or eternal life as something which happened after

death. Far from being interested in some mysterious and vague Paradise which was to come, Jesus was so concerned with one world at a time that He believed that heaven and eternal life were not simply in the future, but that they started here on earth. Jesus thought that anyone who was willing to accept one life at a time, and to live that most abundantly and fully, could here and now be in the presence of the eternal. There is a way of living here and now which is deathless. That is the reason why He never speculated about any theories concerning a future heaven or paradise which was to come. Heaven was not for Jesus a place where life was restored after death, it was a place where the deathless qualities of living, which had been manifested in this world, would be continued forever. Therefore we always find in our Gospels that eternal life is spoken of as a present possession. In other words, our hope for the future depends entirely upon whether we have acquired any eternal qualities to our living in this world. To His followers Jesus said: "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life." "This is eternal life—to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Notice it is in the present tense. Eternal life is not a postponed affair which comes after death, it is a way of living in this world with which death has nothing to do. One writer put it this way: "Immortality is not some destiny conferred from without, but the flower of fruitage which must be developed from within. It is the life of Christ in the soul, blushing with imperishable youth."

This, it seems to me, is the real message of Easter. What makes Easter such a joyful festival of the religious community is not that it is a proclamation concerning the

fact of heaven or a world to come, but that it is a proclamation of the fact that there are qualities of living in this world here and now which are deathless. The writer of the first epistle of St. John gives in a sentence the meaning of Easter. "Beloved, now are we sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Easter has little to tell us about what we shall be, or what the next world is like. Easter has a message for us now, namely that we are children of God, and that life in God is endless and unconquerable. Anyone who lives as close to God as Jesus, anyone who loves God as Jesus, cannot be defeated. That is what the resurrection means. It was the final proof of all Jesus had taught His disciples about eternal life, for so deathless was Christ's living that there was no stone heavy enough, no grave deep enough, no seal strong enough, no soldiers powerful enough, to kill that kind of life. And when Jesus appeared before His disciples after the resurrection, it was not to tell them of a beautiful heaven or paradise which was prepared in some future world to receive them; no, it was simply to show them that His way of life was indeed deathless, that God's causes are never lost causes, that there was a kind of life on earth which is endless. And the disciples who for a few days before had been grief-stricken by their tragic loss, suddenly understood that their Master's way of life was victorious over even death, and with light on their faces they went out into the world with a message of a living Saviour, whose life was deathless.

There is a report from England recently of an English soldier who saw his best friend, a true Christian, blown to bits by a shell. Standing silent for a moment he said, "It will take more than that to stop you." They killed

Lincoln, but so deathless were the qualities of his living that his presence and influence are still very real. That is one meaning of Easter. Those who have caught the spirit of the Christian way of life possess life eternal, which nothing can kill.

"Beloved, now are we sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be." The Easter message assures us that we are children of God, and when we live like children of God, our lives are endless. It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we all hope that some day we shall gather in a heavenly abode with our loved ones. Do you understand then that as Christians we do believe in taking one world at a time? But in doing that we believe in seeking for those things in this world which are eternal. Jesus expressed it well when He said: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." In other words, don't live simply in the expectation of a heaven in the future, but learn now to value the heavenly things which are all around us in our world. Learn to cultivate now a taste for spiritual satisfactions. Heaven starts here on earth for those who are unselfish, and friendly, and loving to one another, for those who are sensitive to beauty both in nature and in human life, and for those who love God through Jesus Christ. A few years ago a distinguished scientist was conducting a forum in a large Eastern city. He had stated his belief that there is a power back of this universe which conserves eternally its spiritual and personal values. In the question period that followed one listener asked: "How can you say that there is a trustworthy divine Administrator in back of this universe, who guarantees the permanence of spiritual values, when a character as perfect as Jesus suffered defeat?" The reply

was eloquent. The speaker paused a minute and then said: "In the light of what Jesus accomplished during His days on the earth and in the centuries since, do you really think Jesus was defeated?" The answer that instinctively comes to the lips of every Christian at Easter is: "No, Jesus was never defeated, and never will be, for His way of life was victorious over death, and is from everlasting to everlasting."

Anyone who has caught the spirit of Christ's way of life possesses here and now life eternal.

## A DOCTRINE OF OPPOSITES

If you glance at the index of a modern anthology of famous quotations, you will probably find that one of the longest lists appears under the word "life." Human beings have always attempted to find appropriate, picturesque, and exact comparisons for this thing called life. In the short history of the human race life has been compared to almost everything under the sun. Life is like a battle, or a bubble; it's a tale told by an idiot, or an enchanted cup; it is like a winter's day, or a summer's rose; it's a fleeting breath or a glorious voyage. Life is, as one Dickens' character put it, "one demd horrid grind," or it is, as another writer said, "a pudding full of plums." Life has been compared to everything from a play to an empty dream, from a beautiful winding road to a rough sea, from a fitful fever to a final star. I understand this attempt to find an adequate description of life reached its ridiculous conclusion a few years ago, when some bright individual compared it to a bowl of cherries. Since that time most intelligent people have given up trying to picture life in epigrammatic form.

The fact of the matter is that nobody can hope to describe life in a terse phrase or sentence, simply because life is too complicated. As soon as we decide to paint a word picture of it in terms of something joyful, we begin

to see that we cannot logically do it, for life is also sad. The same holds true of anything we want to say about life . . . there is always another side to it. I suppose life can be interpreted only in terms of opposites. Life is filled with the most bewildering contrasts and any definition of it must recognize these perpetual contradictions. For example, philosophy, which is the study of life, invariably runs up against a dualism of some kind. No philosopher has ever been able adequately to explain the relation between the mind and the body, between matter and spirit. The doctrine of opposites appears in the field of ethics in the age-long problem of good and evil. In theology there has always been the contrast between God and the Devil. This dualism appears everywhere in life. Professor Brightman of Boston University points out that life can be explained only in terms of what he calls "dialectical tensions," which is an excellent philosophical phrase. All he means is that life is a field of conflict and tension, that everywhere in experience there are opposites warring against one another. Life is always on the brink of death; faith is always besieged with doubt; ideal aspirations vie with petty tempers in every soul; the good makes war against the evil; virtue and vice are in conflict. Whether we call this fact dualism, or dialectical tension, or a doctrine of opposites, we find that everywhere in life there is conflict and contrast.

This is not just a baffling philosophical idea, but a very practical problem which we all face in our lives. It is these very contrasts and contradictions which make living such a difficult task. It is because there are always at least two sides to every problem and decision and idea we confront, that life is so far from simple. Recently I preached a ser-

mon on love and the fact that as Christians we should love one another, using the text: "This is my commandment, that ye love one another." However, it is perfectly obvious that one could preach an excellent sermon on the duty of not loving some things and even hating them, using as a text perhaps the Psalmist's words, "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." Dale Carnegie writes a book called "How to Win Friends and Influence People," but a few weeks after it is out, another man writes just as good a book, if not better, called "How to Lose Friends and Alienate People." That, I maintain, is typical of life. It is because this doctrine of opposites is at work everywhere that it is so difficult to visualize such great ideals as world peace, or the brotherhood of man, or a united Christendom. Conflict, competition, contradiction, and contrast have always been the outstanding characteristics of life. One may wonder whether all this will be changed some day and whether life will be based on peace and harmony and unity; and even further, if life were so changed, whether we would enjoy it? The little girl who said to her mother: "Mother, when I go to heaven may I sometimes be allowed to invite a little devil up to tea," had a good point. Would this be a very interesting life, if it were not for this doctrine of opposites?

I suggest a simple and very general description of life: life is a conflict between the beautiful and the ugly. By beautiful I refer not only to the material beauties of the world about us, but also to the abstract beauties of truth and goodness and love. By ugliness I refer not only to the material ugliness of our world, such as slums and signboards and wars, but also to the abstract ugliness of hatred and greed and selfishness. Certainly life is a continual war

between beauty and ugliness in this sense, not only in the outside world but within ourselves. Unfortunately nobody knows why this is so. Nobody has ever been able to explain why there is so much ugliness in life. Unquestionably it is more man-made than God-made. Lin Yutang in his book, "The Importance of Living," tells a story to illustrate the idea that God did not take the original Paradise away from man, but that man has been continually losing more and more of it as time goes by. His story deals with a man who came to God and told Him that this planet was not good enough for him, and that he wanted to live in a heaven of pearly gates. God took this dissatisfied gentleman and pointed out to him all the wonders and beauties of the planet, the moon in the sky, the blue hills, the petals of an orchid, the cool breezes, the wonders of the Grand Canyon and Niagara Falls, and then asked him if He, God, had not done everything to make this planet beautiful to delight his ears and eyes. But the man still maintained the planet was not good enough for him. So God was angry and said, "If this planet is not good enough for you, I'll send you to hell where you will never see the sailing clouds and the flowering trees, nor hear the gurgling brooks, and you shall live there forever till the end of your days." And God sent him to live in a city apartment. It is true that to a great extent man has spoiled his own Paradise, though that does not account for the reason why God has allowed him to do so. We shall never understand that. All we know is that life presents us with a conflict of opposites, and we are placed in a world where we must recognize that fact and make the most of it.

Have you ever considered that this same tension we have been speaking about between the beautiful and the

ugly, becomes particularly vivid in religion where we meet it as the antithesis between prayer and work, between the contemplative life and the active life? For one thing, Christianity is a religion of beauty, and its churches and services and ideals are all attempts to emphasize the beautiful. Christ tried to open men's eyes to all the loveliness of the earth and human nature. Christianity attempts to nourish the human soul through the beauty of holiness. A Christian is a person who is ever alert to recognize the hidden beauties of this world wherever they may be. Wordsworth expressed this thought in these words:

Beauty—a living presence of the earth,  
Surpassing the most fair ideal forms  
Which craft of delicate spirits hath composed  
From earth's materials—waits upon my steps;  
Pitches her tent before me as I move,  
An hourly neighbor. Paradise, and groves  
Elysian, Fortunate Fields,—like those of old  
Sought in the Atlantic main—why should they be  
A history only of departed things,  
Or a fiction of what never was?  
For the discerning intellect of man,  
When wedded to this goodly universe  
In love and holy passion, shall find these  
A simple produce of the common day.

That is what religion attempts to do—to lift the curtain before our eyes and reveal to us the immortal loveliness of life which should be the "simple produce of the common day."

At the same time that is only half the picture. While Christ tried to bring beauty to the world and to make ordinary men and women aware of it and sensitive to it

through contemplation and prayer, He also felt it was His sacred duty to make people aware of all the ugliness of life. He did not close His eyes to everything which wasn't beautiful, but rather it was the ugly things which made Him open His eyes wider. In other words, He devoted Himself to the task of getting rid of ugliness wherever He found it. One of His most vivid parables portrayed what happened to a rich man basking in the beautiful, who failed to notice the ugly existence of the beggar at his gate. When He told of the priest and the Levite, concerned no doubt with plans for beautiful services, who failed to notice the plight of the poor man who had been attacked by robbers, it is not hard to understand our Master's attitude toward life's ugliness. We must not forget that once when He entered the temple, He did not stop to worship or contemplate its beauty, until He had first driven out the money-changers who were soiling its loveliness with their ugly business. Yes, Jesus felt He had an obligation to see not only the beauty of life, but its ugliness also, for He recognized clearly this doctrine of opposites.

In our New Testament Mary and her sister Martha have lived on as the personification of this doctrine. Mary was very sensitive to the beautiful, whether it was expensive perfume or lovely thoughts. She closed her eyes to the ugliness of the world, and loved nothing better than to contemplate its beauties. When Jesus came to visit, she sat at His feet and feasted on the loveliness of fellowship with her Master. Martha, on the other hand, was more aware of the ugliness of life. She could not stand the idea of a home which was not spotlessly clean, or a meal which was not well prepared. Apparently she was a person who knew

that while there was nothing wrong with contemplation, at the same time somebody had to do the work, someone had to combat the ugliness which comes into a home or a world.

One of the unique characteristics of Jesus was that He combined both these sides of His own nature. He was an idealist like Mary, but He was also a realist like Martha. Jesus loved to engage in periods of contemplation and communion with God; but He always came back from those times of prayer filled with a desire to fight against all the ugliness in the world about Him. Jesus was a dreamer, but He was also a workman. Jesus loved the beautiful wherever it was, and He came to bring a new kind of spiritual beauty to the human race; but He was well aware of all the ugliness of His world, and in the end He gave His life in order that all kinds of ugliness might disappear.

This, it seems to me, is close to the heart of the Christian Gospel. As Christians we have a sacred duty to see and recognize all the beauties of our world, even in days like these, and to enjoy them. But at the same time we have a sacred duty to see the ugly things of life and to work toward their eradication. As one poet put it:

Open my eyes to visions girt with beauty  
And with wonder lit,  
But let me always see the dirt, and all  
That spawn and die in it.

That is a true Christian prayer. Thomas Carlyle once wrote: "Two men I honour; First, the toilworn craftsman . . . second, him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable, not daily bread, but the bread of life . . ."

And then he added these significant words: "Unspeakably touching is it, however, when I find both dignities united; and he that must toil outwardly for the lowest of man's wants, is also toiling inwardly for the highest. . . . Such a one will take thee back to Nazareth itself."

Now the great task that all of us face is the combining of these two dignities. Unfortunately there is no hard and fast rule as to how this can be done, for each one of us will have a different approach. In the history of Christian piety the book, "The Practice and the Presence of God," which bears the name of Brother Lawrence, gives one way to effect this reconciliation. If we take Brother Lawrence at his word, to pray was to him to work, and to work was to pray. He pointed out that in the clatter and noise of his kitchen he possessed God with as great tranquility as if he were on his knees at the blessed sacrament. In other words, the very task of getting rid of the ugly was to him beautiful. However, Brother Lawrence had little if any mystical side to his nature, and his method would not work for everybody. Some of us find that honest manual or intellectual work is nothing but sheer drudgery, and we are apt to become weary in well-doing. Work for us does not become prayer. Rather we find it is from the experience of the beautiful, in worship and other ways, that we receive the power which enables us to carry on our work. At least, the two opposites must in some way be joined. A sense of reality in religion is preserved only when there is a connection between thought and worship on the one hand, and action and work on the other. And a sense of reality in life is preserved only when there is a connection between chapels and kitchens, between good and evil, beauty and ugliness. What that connection is to

be we must find out ourselves, but at least in all of us should be found something of Mary with her still devotion, and something of Martha with her solicitous care. "A certain woman named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary. . . ."

## ON BEING THANKFUL \*

You may have seen a cartoon which appeared in one of our weekly magazines recently, picturing the President and his wife together. Mrs. President is asking her husband: "Do you think a Thanksgiving proclamation can be enforced this year?" A great many people are wondering about that. Is there any real significance in a Thanksgiving Day, set aside as it should be to offer thanks to God, in a year when the whole world is engaged in war and there is so much cruelty, brutality, and horror? Can any sane person really be thankful this year? I understand that the Society for the Advancement of Atheism sent a petition to the President suggesting that since he had at one time mixed up the dates of Thanksgiving, it might be wise if he did away with it altogether. There are many people who are not atheists who would agree. Perhaps Thanksgiving this year is a breach of taste.

Is Thanksgiving just a religious sham this year? Have we nothing that we can honestly be thankful for? I imagine that the question could be answered by saying that of course we can be thankful—we can at least be thankful that we are not worse off than we are. This is the attitude of those who say: "Suppose your automobile or radio hasn't been paid for, you can certainly be grateful that

\* A Thanksgiving Sermon.

you only have twenty more installments to go." What if men, women, and children are being cruelly killed and starved in Europe and the Far East, we can be thankful that at least we in America are comparatively safe. What if there are a great many people who will not have a Thanksgiving dinner today, let us give thanks that we are going to enjoy one. You all know this common attitude. There is a story told of a Scotch minister who regularly gave a prayer of thanksgiving at his morning service. He was a devout man who remembered all temporal mercies, as well as spiritual gifts, in his prayer. One Sunday morning the weather outside was enough to try a saint. There were inches of slushy snow and a drizzling rain into the bargain. The few who had ventured out on such a day wondered what he was going to say about a day like that when he rose to give his customary prayer. With the sincerity for which he was noted, he began as follows: "Dear Lord, we thank Thee that it is not always as bad as this." At least, some would say, we can give that kind of thanks this year. One writer says: "I felt most ill-used because a slight accident had disabled my right hand. Taking a walk through the crowded streets I met one man with a leg deficient, another without the usual number of arms; a blind woman; a girl with her face terribly disfigured; two deaf and dumb men; and an old man with a churchyard cough; two funerals and a van of prisoners. Having passed these and come to a lunatic asylum, I made up my mind that I should be very thankful that I was not as badly off as thousands of other people."

Is that the kind of thanks that we should give this year? Should we be grateful that things aren't any worse than they are? Most thoughtful people would admit that such

thanks as that is not true gratitude at all. When we say that we are thankful that things aren't any worse for us than they are, what we are really saying is that we are grateful that there are people who are worse off than we are. We are making our thanks depend on the suffering and hardship of other people. There is no meaner, more despicable person than the one who goes around revelling in the misfortunes of other people, simply because it makes him thankful for his own good fortune.

Now, if this is true, can we really have an honest Thanksgiving this year? In the light of all the suffering and misery and chaos in our world; in view of the fact that it is not really gratitude to be thankful that we are not worse off; we might well wonder if it would not have been wise to postpone Thanksgiving this year.

Before we decide this question I would have you look with me for a minute at the repeated and striking testimony of history. In the first place, we know that the first national Thanksgiving was the acknowledgment of a very frugal harvest, amid dangers and privations that were by no means over. When we recall how few their numbers were, how far they were from their homes, and the fact that they were surrounded by perils both known and unknown, we can only marvel that the Pilgrims found it possible to give thanks at all. And similarly the familiar hymn which starts with the words: "Now thank we all our God," was written in the midst of a terrible epidemic by a minister who had buried so many people, and seen so much suffering, that apparently he could have had very little to be thankful for. George Matheson's hymn, "Oh light that follows all my way," is the song of a blind man. St. Paul, whose letters are filled with the exclamation,

"Thanks be to God," was a man who suffered the severest bodily pain most of his life. Jesus prayed, "I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth," at a time when He knew He was to be crucified. It would be easy to find countless similar illustrations from your own experience. Not long ago I heard of a woman, an invalid, who had been confined to her bed for many years. One day a visitor came in to see her, and she looked up and said, "Oh, I feel so happy and thankful." When the visitor asked her why, she replied: "Because the doctor tells me that if I continue to improve, and if the weather stays fine, and if nothing unusual happens, in two weeks I may be turned over and lie on the other side."

Such testimony as this seems to prove that real thanksgiving does not depend on any outward circumstance or event. The people who say we cannot have a Thanksgiving this year when times are so difficult and horrible are trying to relate thanksgiving to prosperity and peace—an outward condition. The people who say that we should be thankful that we are not as badly off as others are likewise trying to make thanksgiving dependent on the outward condition of other people. But history has shown repeatedly that real thanksgiving is not determined by anything outward, but rather by something within us. The story of the ten lepers in the New Testament is much to the point. After Jesus had healed all of them, only one returned to offer thanksgiving, and that one was not a Jew but a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Were not the ten cleansed, but where are the nine?" What better illustration could we have of the fact that thanksgiving doesn't depend on outward circumstances? All ten had been cured, but only one returned to give thanks. If thanksgiving were

brought about by outward conditions, all ten would have returned, for the same miracle had happened to all of them.

Thanksgiving is based, first of all, on an inner attitude toward life. Life has a dark side and a bright side, and always has, and we must decide which we are going to emphasize. Two girls gather grapes; one is happy because they have found the grapes and the other is unhappy because the grapes have seeds in them. Two women examine a bush; one is unhappy because it has thorns; the other notices the roses and is overjoyed with their fragrance. We see exactly what we train ourselves to see in this life. Our outlook on life is all-important, and it is something that depends solely on us. Some people are always unhappy and unthankful whether it is peace or war time, simply because they are constantly looking at what they lack.

Fortunately there are others in this world who have trained themselves to look not at what they lack, but at what they have. They are the kind of people who sing to themselves: "Count your many blessings, count them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord hath done." When we forget what we lack and start counting what we have, it may well surprise us. We have the light of our eyes and the light of our minds. We have the wonder of imagination and the miracle of memory. We have the glory of the heavens above and the earth beneath. We have the trust of friends and the laughter of little children. We have the treasures found in books, art, music, and prophecy. There is no need to make the list longer for it would shame us all. The important thing to realize is that thanksgiving is brought about by our

outlook on life and all the many gifts that God has given us.

Thanksgiving also depends on another inward manifestation—humility. The assumption beneath the idea that Thanksgiving should be done away with this year is simply that we have not received all we deserve in this life. The proud man says, "Why should I be thankful, I deserve a lot more than I receive?" Henry Ward Beecher once said: "Pride slays thanksgiving, but a humble mind is the soil out of which thanks naturally grow. A proud man is seldom a grateful man for he never thinks he gets as much as he deserves." The proud man says, "Why should I thank God when He has brought about a world filled with so much misery and suffering?" He blames God for everything. The humble man looks at it in an entirely different light. He realizes that God is not to blame. It is we who have cherished anger and greed and pride which brought about our sad plight. The question that worries the humble man is whether or not we deserve a better world to live in. He knows that God cannot be blamed for our sins. The humble man sees that through all the hard times God has been good: the sun still shines, seed time and harvest time have not failed, love and friendship and beauty are still a part of life, and he gives thanks to God.

But if we carry thanksgiving to its deepest source, we see that it depends on repentance. The Psalmist says: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." Only when we are really penitent can we give thanks. Only when we recognize our own weaknesses and shortcomings and repent, can we give praise to God for His many blessings. Dr. Rufus Jones tells a story of a mother who had a

brilliant son who had gone to Oxford and graduated with high honors, and who then went to war and was killed. The mother soon afterwards had a singular dream: she thought an angel appeared to her saying that she might have her son back for five minutes. "Choose," said the angel, "which five minutes you will have. Will you have five minutes of his life when he was leading his classes at Oxford, or five minutes of those days he spent in the service of his country?" The mother reflected a moment and said, "If I could have him back for five minutes, I should prefer to have him as a little boy on that day he disobeyed me, and went out angry, and then in a few minutes returned asking me to forgive him. If I could have him back for five minutes, I want him back as that little penitent boy." Now the reason she wanted him back then, was that when he was that little penitent boy he was most keenly aware of his mother's love and thankful for it. For repentance always brings with it thankfulness, and thankfulness, love. I doubt if on this Thanksgiving Day there is a greater need than that—penitence. Today we should take a few minutes alone to repent of our foolish pride, our sordid ambitions, our silly prejudices, and all the great multitude of our sins. Then we can truly give thanks to God, and say with the Psalmist: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His Holy Name."

## A GREAT COMMANDMENT

OGDEN NASH wrote a thought-provoking two-line verse which goes like this:

There is nothing in any religion  
Which compels us to love the pigeon.

That verse suggests an excellent question—just what does our religion compel us to love? When Christ spoke His commandment about loving one another and our neighbors as ourselves, and even our enemies, did He mean that we must love everybody and everything from pigeons to Hitler? In other words, what is the meaning of the rule of love around which the Gospel of Christ is built? We could probably agree that the word used most constantly in regard to Christianity is the word love. Around that word all the great Christian doctrines and conceptions seem to gather. It was the word continually on Christ's lips and in His thoughts. The idea of loving one another is repeated more times in our New Testament than any other. Christianity is to some extent the challenge to obey this commandment of love. Most Christians would agree that if everybody obeyed it, many of our great problems would be solved. Christ taught that the Kingdom of God would be ushered in by love. For centuries people everywhere have known this and believed this. Thousands of

sermons have been preached on the text: "This is my commandment that ye love one another." And yet in this day the Kingdom of God is as far away, if not farther away, than ever before in history, for there is little evidence in our world now that great numbers of people are obeying this commandment. Why is this?

One can think of many reasons. Thinkers have pointed out that it is impossible to obey Christ's great commandment of love because of sin, fixed in the heart within and the world without. Anybody really trying to obey literally the rule of love, continually bumps up against this contradiction of sin. Some years ago I was in the South Station in Boston waiting for a train. An old man with a long beard came hobbling toward me. When he was about opposite to where I was standing he dropped a five-cent piece he had in his hand. Intending to do a kindness, I bent down and picked up the nickel and handed it to the old gentleman. He looked at it and then looked at me and said: "Hey, give me the fifty-cent piece I dropped." All my explanatory eloquence was useless, a crowd gathered and a policeman came up. In the end I lost forty-five cents, mostly because I happened to have a fifty-cent piece in my pocket, and because apparently to a Boston policeman an old man with an Irish name is more honest than a young Protestant minister. Anyone who has something like that happen, begins to realize how difficult it is to love one another. So many of our seemingly needy neighbors are engaged in practices which make our love a travesty, so many of the deformed specimens of humanity, found begging in our streets, have larger bank accounts than we do, and to love them seems foolish. But not only is this fact of sin found in the outside world in other

people, but worst of all it is in ourselves, so that, try as hard as we may to love our neighbors, we only succeed in loving ourselves more. Now Calvin in his day, and Reinhold Neibuhr in ours have pointed out that the only escape from this contradiction of sin within ourselves is through God's redeeming grace. While that may be true, it hardly helps most of us very much, because it is a conception which is not simple enough or practical enough for us to make use of in our daily lives. At least we can agree that it is the fact of sin which makes loving one another so difficult.

In the second place, it is hard to obey this commandment because of the fact that love always involves hatred. For example, if we love liberty we must hate everything that is indicative of tyranny. It is impossible to love truth without hating lies, to love the beautiful without hating the ugly, or the good without hating evil. As the Psalmist said, "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." Hatred is indeed the shrinking of the soul that loves, from those things which threaten to destroy that love. While this is logical, it complicates the problem of obeying this rule, because it is so difficult to know what to hate and how far to let our hatred go. Robert Louis Stevenson once wrote: "The truth of Christ's teaching seems to be this: in our own person and fortune, we should be ready to accept and pardon all; it is our cheek we are to turn; it is our coat to give away to the man who has stolen our cloak. But when another's face is buffeted perhaps a little of the lion will become us best. That we are to suffer others to be injured and stand by, is not conceivable and surely not desirable." In other words, our hatred should never be simply personal resentment, but rather the kind of hatred which Christ exhibited

toward the Scribes and Pharisees—a hatred not of them personally, but of the things they did and the way they lived. Perhaps that is the most we can say. At least it is clear that the fact that love involves hatred makes it difficult to obey Christ's great commandment.

Many of us, too, find it psychologically impossible to love one another and our neighbors as ourselves. A little boy had been to Sunday School on a day when the class had been discussing love, and the teacher pointed out that Christ said you must love everybody, and it was their duty to do that if they would be Christians. When he arrived home he went to his mother and told her he was not going to Sunday School any longer. When his mother asked him why, he replied: "The teacher told us that to be Christians we had to love everybody. But I cannot be a Christian because I never will be able to love that big bully who sits side of me at school." That little boy voiced a profound problem which every Christian faces. Most of us find that there are big bullies or equally hateful people in our lives, whom we cannot love. We find it psychologically impossible to love some people, even though we are aware of no actual cause of dislike. Other people possess such unlovable qualities—they are mean or jealous; they make no attempt to understand us and what we are trying to do; or they are selfish and self-centered—it is impossible to love them.

The problem becomes more complicated when we remember that there are many people who do not seem to want our love, who feel offended when we offer it to them. There is a great deal of truth in that old saying, "If you want to make a person your friend, get him to do something for you." The point being, of course, that more

often than not we do not make friends by doing something for other people. It was the very people whom Jesus was trying to help most, who crucified Him. The Christian conception of love seems to make beautiful reading, but when we begin to put it to practical tests in our lives, it becomes more and more difficult to understand.

Now even though there are all these difficulties, and many more you can think of, to be faced in understanding and obeying Christ's commandment of love, at the same time it is not meaningless. One of the great troubles with Christianity is that far too many people have let words such as these become sentimental. The last sentence in the book, "The Folklore of Capitalism," is this: "The greatest destroyer of ideals is he who believes in them so strongly that he cannot fit them to practical needs." That is a good definition of sentimentalism and also just what some have done with Christ's commandment of love. We believe in it so strongly, we are so sentimental about it, we cannot put it into practice. In a column of advice to the lovelorn I saw this: "Marriage proposals should never be made in the moonlight." While I proposed in the rain myself, I suspect that is good advice because the moonlight is apt to make one sentimental. We look at things differently in the daylight. Too much of our Christianity is moonlight religion. We are too sentimental about it. Christ was not a sentimentalist. He was very practical, and I feel sure He meant His commandment to be practical too. He realized well that the fact of sin, that the duty of hatred, that physical repugnance, or subtle psychological differences in human beings made it a difficult commandment, and yet He meant what He said, and believed that it was possible for human beings to love one another. I think

the reason is this: When Christ told us to love one another, He did not mean that we had to *like* everybody, in the sense of being affectionate toward them. The word love in the New Testament primarily means charity, and charity means unselfishness. Therefore when Christ commanded us to love our neighbor, He was in reality commanding us to be unselfish in all our dealings with him, and not affectionate in any moonlight sense of the term. Christ did not like everyone Himself, as anyone can see who reads of His dealings with the Scribes and the Pharisees and the names He called them. But while He did not like everybody, He was always unselfish in all His dealings with His fellow-men. That, to me, is the secret of Christian love. It means essentially unselfishness, and there is nothing impossible or sentimental about unselfishness. The process of subordinating our own interests and inclinations to those of others is something we can all do. To be a Christian, therefore, to obey the commandment of love, does not mean that we have to like everybody, it simply means that so far as possible our words, our thoughts, our acts are unselfish.

The task of becoming a Christian is, to a great extent, the task of learning the mechanisms of unselfishness. I have been thinking that perhaps after I have been in my present position about twenty years, and have grown a long white beard, that I will then carry out a secret desire of mine and write a catechism, which will be used to instruct students in the principles of the Christian religion. If I ever do that, my catechism will be very different from the old ones, in that it will contain few, if any, of the theological questions found in those documents—like “Are you willing to be damned for the glory of God?”

I think my catechism would be for the most part a test of individual unselfishness. For one thing, I would ask a question like this: What do you do when somebody criticizes you or even insults you? Some of us have a wonderful faculty of remembering every courtesy, every hostility, every ingratititude or grudge which others have shown us, until our minds are like muddy pools covered with a scum of selfish resentments.

Sir Walter Scott said that Dante's "Divine Comedy" was spoiled for him because it was filled with so much of the author's personal malignity and resentment against so many people. Many fine lives are spoiled for the same reason, for the ability to accept criticism and personal injury of that kind is indeed one of the mechanisms of unselfishness. Even Martin Luther was never too successful in doing this for he could say: "My soul is too glad and too great to be at heart the enemy of any man." But when somebody criticized a work of his, he indignantly wrote back: "Never have I seen a more ignorant person than you are, though you boast you have studied dialectics for years. I greatly rejoice to be condemned by so obscure a head." Michelangelo, the great painter and sculptor, found it very difficult to accept the criticisms of others. When critical comments of one of his paintings were made he retaliated by drawing a life-sized portrait of the critic, showing him in hell with horns on his head and a serpent twined about him; and then he enjoyed his vindictive triumph amid the laughter of all the poor man's friends. There is nothing more difficult than to be insensitive to the criticism and malicious or adverse comments of others, and yet being able to do just that is a sign that we are obeying Christ's commandment of love. There is a story

about a man who hated Henry Ward Beecher bitterly, saying that he would not go across the street to hear him preach. Later, however, he became the famous preacher's devoted friend, and his explanation of the change was brief and simple: whenever a man did Beecher an ill turn, Beecher was not happy until he had done the offender a good turn. There came to be a whimsical proverb about Beecher, "If you want a favor from Beecher, kick him." The person who does not easily take offense, who goes out of his way to get along with his enemies, and who keeps his mind free from malice and grudges has learned one of the arts of unselfishness.

A second question my catechism would contain is this: Are you a good loser? Most of us find it easy to be unselfish toward those who are less fortunate and less prosperous and less gifted than we are. And some of us can get along pretty well with our enemies, mostly by avoiding them. But how few there are of us who can get along in a friendly fashion with our rivals, with those who outshine us, who have more ability than we have, who receive the honors we wanted, and who accomplish the things we wish we could. That takes a really unselfish person. Jealousy is a sure sign of selfishness. The story of Cinderella and her jealous sisters has never needed an explanation since the day it was written, for its truth is self-evident. Goethe once wrote: "Against the superiority of another, there is no remedy but love." When we have learned to acquire an unselfish interest and admiration for the excellence of other people, even when they surpass our own, I think we have gone a long way towards gaining the kind of unselfishness Jesus was talking about when He told us to love one another.

Another question in my catechism would be: Can you see life through another person's eyes? In other words, have you got a sympathetic imagination? That is perhaps the most important mechanism of unselfishness, the ability to put yourself in somebody else's place. That was one of the supreme characteristics of Jesus. He had the knack of always seeing life from the other person's point of view. That was why He could eat with publicans and sinners, with rich and poor. He understood them, and while He saw clearly their failures, He also recognized the possibilities of goodness in all of them. He hoped that they would understand Him, but when they failed, so great was His sympathetic imagination that He gave His life to help them, the most beautiful example of pure unselfishness the world has ever known. I was reading a book recently in which these strange words appeared: "Our attitude to all men would be Christian if we regarded them as though they were dying, and determined our relation to them in the light of death, both of their death and our own. A person who is dying calls forth a special kind of feeling. Our attitude to him is at once softened and lifted onto a higher plane." Those are very profound words. When a person dies, invariably his friends think only of his good qualities and those things of good report about him, forgetting as far as possible his weaknesses. In other words, in the face of death most of us have a sympathetic imagination. The difference between us and Jesus is that Jesus had that attitude not only toward the dead, but toward the living. If we can develop such an attitude when a person dies, surely it is not impossible to believe we can train ourselves to see the living from the same point of view.

Those are the questions I would ask in my catechism, for I believe that unselfishness is the foundation stone of a Christian's life. The interesting thing about the distinction I have made between loving in the sense of unselfishness, and liking in the sense of true affection is this: the more unselfish a person becomes, the more affectionate are his relations with his fellowmen. For as soon as a person frees himself of grudges, of jealousy, of pride, and of meanness, it becomes easy to like almost everybody. Because Jesus was so genuinely unselfish, it was not difficult for Him to be affectionate toward all, and even at the last to like His enemies and to forgive them. The art of learning to like other people is the art of learning to become unselfish. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another."

## FAITH FOR A NEW AGE

ABOUT a year ago my elder son received as a birthday present his first watch, which cost his parents about one dollar and a half. He was given a warning to take good care of it, because due to the war it was doubtful whether he would be able to get another for some time. For about a year he was very careful of that watch and I became certain in my own mind that here was the first sign that my methods of child guidance were superior to those of my own father, since I had broken my first watch in a very few months. It was therefore something of a shock and a humbling experience to enter my son's room recently and find him busily engaged in investigating the mechanisms of his watch, which lay strewn on the table before him. So I said to him what fathers have always said in such circumstances: "Let's see you put it together." And he answered as sons have always replied: "I'll do it right away." I left him for an hour or so, and when I came back, he turned around and said: "Well, I've put it together." Thinking that a modern miracle had taken place in my own home, I rushed over to the table and my son held up the watch and said: "See, it is all put together—except for this one little wheel." Is it not true that the glory of almost everything in this life lies in its organization? A watch is absolutely useless if just one little wheel

is left out. A stained glass window is just a mass of little bits of colored glass which are meaningless until they have been organized into the framework of the window. A home is just a group of individuals of varied interests and temperaments living under one roof and is a place to get away from quickly unless there is a great mother or father who organizes it so that it has a loving and joyful atmosphere. And the same thing is true of a church, a college, a city or a nation—their glory depends on their organization. And of course today we are beginning to see that the same thing is true of our world, and that it, too, must be organized if it is going to be a fit place to live in.

Unquestionably it is difficult for many Americans to admit that the glory of anything lies in its organization. We have been great individualists. The development of our country is due in great part to that fact. But many of us have been slow to see that a change has come. One writer has described this change in these words: "Our fathers went to school in a little red school house on the village green. If there had occurred a fire in that style of building, it would have been proper to shout, 'Everybody for himself!' and let the strong be charitable to the weak. There were windows and doors enough on the ground level so that if everybody rushed for an exit, safety could still be insured. This would not be so in the modern school building with three or four thousand pupils. It would be sure death there to shout 'fire!' and advise everybody to rush for an exit. A stampede of individualists would be hopeless." Exactly this kind of change has taken place in our country and in our world. Another speaker has confessed: "I want change. I don't want the old rugged individualism—rugged for a few and ragged for the

many." The day when everybody could be out for himself is gone. We have to organize everything not only for protection, but for survival. This has been a hard lesson for us to learn.

After this war is won, the greatest danger ahead is that we will try to go back to our individualistic ways, as we did after the last war. There is, of course, something very appealing about individualism. If you have read "The Memoirs of a Superfluous Man" by Albert Jay Nock you will know what I mean. The writer of that book is an individualist of the first order. Because he has been able to remain aloof from all organizations he can scoff at them, and he does it in an exquisite manner. Anybody who belongs to an organization or has tried to run one, can enjoy what he has to say, but the fact is that most of what he says is not true, for you cannot do away with organizations. For example, he writes: "The history of organized Christianity is the most depressing study I ever undertook, and also one of the most interesting. I came away from it with the firm conviction that the prodigious evils which spot the record can all be traced to the attempt to organize and institutionalize something which is in its nature incapable of being successfully either organized or institutionalized." Anybody who has been connected with a church knows exactly what he means. The Protestant Church as an institution is weak and its organization is bad. But that does not mean that it should be done away with or that its organization cannot be improved. The Christian Church has preserved the Christian religion and, weak though it may be, nothing better has come along to do it. An idea, to survive and make a contribution to the welfare of the human race, must have an organization

built around it. Labor unions are full of weaknesses today, but they are trying to preserve the idea that a worker's livelihood should be protected. Our Congress is weak. A New York newspaper said recently: "The truth is that Congress has for generations been a rather irresponsible body, chiefly because of its bad internal organization. . . . We are somehow able to muddle along with this system in peace time, but its inadequacy becomes a grave matter in a crisis like the present." And yet even Congress is helping to uphold a democratic idea. I imagine that the peace organization which will come out of this war will be far from perfect, but if it can preserve the idea that all the nations of this world must live in peace and harmony with one another, it will be worthwhile. Yes, we are living in a world where the glory of everything is determined by its organization.

Now, if this is true what is it that makes an organization successful? There are a number of obvious things which can be mentioned. A good organization must be built around a good idea. As Victor Hugo said, "There is nothing so powerful in this world as an idea whose time has come." An organization based on such an idea can be powerful. A successful organization must have creative leadership. W. Macneile Dixon, in his great book, "The Human Situation," speaks of the fact that the trouble with most groups is that they lack able leadership. He writes: "There is no lack of seedy reformers, the 'sky-blue idealists' as Carlyle called them, kind hearts and muddy understanding, potato philosophers, who see their way to provide beef and beer, or preferably beef without beer, for everyone from East to West; the grass-green enthusiasts who in their mind's eye see men all over the earth sitting

forever at their cottage doors, festooned with ivy and honeysuckle. . . ." Yes, it is that type of leadership which is the ruin of many organizations. Furthermore, to organize anything successfully one must have sense of order, a quality lacking in the sky-blue idealistic or more often the rosy-pink realistic type of organization which turns many a good man into a cynic. L. P. Jacks once wrote: "We peace-loving people, we war-haters, we Christians have a great deal to learn from armies. What a pity that all the skill and discipline and competence and courage should be used for fighting purpose only. If we could only get it into non-fighting purpose." The kind of orderliness represented by our armed services is a necessity for a successful organization.

These are some of the characteristics of a good organization. But I am concerned with one fundamental conception of an organization, the lack of which seems to me to be at the root of the weakness of organized life today. It is the reason why home life in America is weak; it is the reason for so many of the troubles faced by business concerns; it is the reason behind the ineffectiveness of the church; and it is the reason why all attempts at organized peace have failed. Bluntly it could be stated thus: most organizations in America have been built around the conception of satisfying empty stomachs instead of empty hearts. In other words, we have thought that the basis of a successful organization was economic, when as a matter of fact it must be religious. We tried to build a peace after the last war on purely economic lines and it failed. A man who tries to build a home on the basis of material security, may have a lovely house but it is never a home. As long as the main purpose of American business is financial profit

there will be social unrest. The fundamental basis of any successful organization, whether it is a school or a college or a church or a club must be religious. In 1717 John Wise, pastor of Ipswich, Massachusetts, said: "The end of all good government is to cultivate humanity, and promote the happiness of all, and the good of every man in all his rights, his life, his liberty without injury or abuse to any." Those words express exactly what is meant by saying that the basis of a successful organization is religious. While Jesus never laid down any specific rules as to how a good organization should be set up, He did state clearly the general principles. His ideal of an organization was one in which every man would have a joyous sense of striving and working, not for himself but for the welfare of his fellowmen. His words: "Whosoever would be first among you, let him be your servant," are just as true when applied to an organization, as they are when applied to an individual. For centuries Americans have recognized this truth, and at times have been willing to fight for it, but today the world is still waiting to discover whether we are willing to live by it. The central conception in Christ's way of life is the sanctity of individual personality. And that is also the foundation-stone of a successful organization, the main purpose of which must be to help, enhance and enrich human personality.

Can we honestly hope that human beings will ever be able to organize themselves on the basis of this religious conception? One answer is that it never can be done because human beings are so selfish that it is impossible to hope to organize them around such an unselfish idea. One thinks of all the attempts which have been made in history to found an ideal community and to organize it

so that a few people at least could lead an ideal life, and they all failed. There have been no end of perfect social organizations planned and dreamed and even tried out since Plato's Republic was written, but not one of them ever succeeded. When Emerson went to visit Bronson Alcott's experiment at Fruitlands, soon after it opened, he wrote that everything looked serene but added: "I will not prejudge them successful. They look well in July; we shall see them in December." And of course by December it had failed. Fruitlands was about like all experiments in perfect social organization, it started well but soon ran aground on the shoals of human selfishness. And so, many people believe that the idea of organizing a successful peace after this war, the hope of organizing business on unselfish principles, or organizing anything on this religious idea is just pure nonsense and superficial optimism. Human nature is essentially selfish and there is no possibility of organizing people around the idea of the sanctity of human personality and the promotion of the happiness of all. The world will have to wait a long while before human beings are capable of this.

But how far is this correct? We know human beings are selfish, but interestingly enough we have developed the kind of a world in which our selfishness, if it is at all intelligent, seems to lead to an organized life of exactly the sort we have been talking about. It is because there are three thousand pupils in the burning school, each anxious to save himself, that makes it necessary for them to follow the rules laid down in the organized fire drill which was set up to save them all. It is because we are interested in keeping healthy ourselves that we must organize our communities and prevent epidemics which know no bound-

dary lines. Big business has grown to such an extent that today we know we cannot keep our own material prosperity unless it is shared by all. We want peace, because war shatters our own lives and those of our children, but we know that today we cannot have peace as an individual nation, for it must be a world peace. In other words, we have built a world in which this selfish trait of human nature forces us to organize on unselfish principles. I can understand that some of our forefathers may well have found religious ideas like this one too idealistic. But the most startling fact about the age we are living in is that the so-called idealism of religion has become realistic, and the commonplace truths of Christianity which we have been accustomed to pay lip-service to have become the very principles by which we are forced to live.

Coleridge once wrote: "To restore a commonplace truth to its first uncommon luster, you need only translate it into action." That is what the world is waiting for today, men and women who are willing to take this commonplace truth of religion, namely the value and sacredness of human personality, and to translate it into action by building their organizations around it. We cannot escape the fact that the glory of everything is made possible by its organization. In the past the basis of a successful organization was economic, today it must be religious. In the past an individual could be saved alone, today we cannot be saved at all unless we are saved together. That is the faith of the new age which is dawning, and if men and women are willing to translate it into intelligent action our world is not doomed, but rather entering a new and great age. For though the glory of everything lies in its organization, it is, after all, individual men and women

who determine what organizations will be like. There is an old, time-worn legend which expresses beautifully the Christian hope which we all need today. It goes like this: "When Jesus had finished His work on earth He met near the gate of Heaven the Angel Gabriel. And Gabriel was troubled and asked Jesus if He had made plans and had built up a good organization on earth so that He was sure His work would be carried on. And Jesus said: 'I have given the message to Peter and John, and to Mary and Martha. They will tell others and so it will spread.' But Gabriel doubted and said, 'What if they forget? Hast Thou made no other plans?' And Jesus stood quietly with lighted face and said: 'I have no other plans. I am counting on them.' "

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